TRECOTHICK BOWER;

OR, THE

LADY OF THE WEST COUNTRY.

A Tale.

609

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

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THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY; DISCARDED SON; HOUSES OF OSMA AND ALMERIA; MONASTERY OF ST. COLUMB; VICAR OF LANSDOWNE, &c. &c.

By Sorrow's shading hand
Touch'd into pow'r more exquisitely soft,
By tears adorn'd, intender'd by Distress.
Oh sweetness without name! when Love looks on
With Pity's melting eye, that to the soul
Endears, ennobles her whom Fate afflicts,
Or Fortune leaves unhappy! MALLET.

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TRECOTHICK BOWER.

609

CHAP. I.

————I fancy
I'm now turn'd wild, a commoner of nature,
Of all forsaken, and forsaking all:
Live in a shady forest's sylvan scene;
Stretch'd at my length beneath some blasted oak,
I lean my head upon the mossy bank,
And look just of a piece, as I grew from it. DRYDEN.

THIS was an evidence too strong of the truth of Hardwick's statement to permit a lingering doubt to remain any longer of it; and dropping it from his trembling hand, Edmund, covering his eyes, resigned himself to all that despair and desolation of feeling which the impassioned heart of

youthful sensibility is but too apt to experience, at finding the confidence it fondly reposed abused.

As easily deprest as elevated, from wanting that experience that teaches us to moderate our feelings, it is tempted, in the first moment of disappointment, to view the world as a desert, and consequently abandon itself to despair.

"Oh! here, where I so fondly trusted, so faithfully regarded, to be deceived!—deceived by him whom as a brother I loved—compelled to renounce that intercourse which custom and affection had rendered so essential to my happiness—oh! it breaks my very heart!" cried Edmund, with a gush of sorrow that almost impeded his utterance.

"Come, come, cheer up," cried sir Roland, gently shaking him by the shoulder, after he had perused the letter; "you the son of a soldier, and suffer yourself to be thus easily overcome!"

"I hope and believe," cried Edmund,

"a common

"a common calamity would not find me wanting in patience; but what I have now met with is more, I confess, than I can well bear."

"And call you not it a common one?" said sir Roland, emphatically. "Ah! this is one of the illusions of youth, to believe all as sincere and generous as themselves; but as well, my young friend, might you look for eternal sunshine, as hope to meet with nothing but sincerity and unbroken faith. Of the misery inflicted on man by man, what age, what story, does not furnish us with proofs! repine not, therefore, too bitterly at experiencing but what all are liable to; nor because you cannot possess all you wish, suffer yourself to reject the enjoyment of a partial dispensation of happiness. Though liable to be wounded by its thorns, we still caress the rose for its fragrance; and so should we nourish hope, though disappointment may now and then occur."

"True," said Edmund, though with a

deep sigh; then uncovering his eyes, "Yes," he said, after the pause of a minute, "I see I should be ungrateful indeed, after what has happened—after having a friend like you so unexpectedly raised to me, were I to evince a doubt of the protecting goodness of Heaven, by resigning myself to despair; but you'll allow the trial a severe one—allow the heart of acute feeling can better almost bear any other than that which gives it to know its affections thrown back upon it, its confidence misplaced."

"Certainly," said sir Roland; "but if we were not destined to severe trials, we should not have been endued with fortitude. You must exert yours to think no more of your false friend, for perfidy should ever excite contempt."

"Contempt!" repeated Edmund, in a passionate tone, "oh! can I confine myself to a mere feeling of that, should I find he has succeeded in robbing me of her I love!"

"A short time will probably put you out

out of all suspense on the subject," returned sir Roland; "let that consideration, therefore, induce you to compose your mind."

But for any thing to do this, short of the absolute termination of this torturing suspense, Edmund felt to be impossible; yet such was the nobleness of his nature, such his veneration for all connected with his deceased friend—with him who had given peace to the expiring moments of his mother—a holy resting-place to the bones of his sire, that not even the idea of his worst apprehension being verified was able to inspire him with a thought of vengeance.

Calmly to bear his wrongs was more, indeed, than he felt he was equal to, a forbearance above his magnanimity to practise; but to uplift his arm in vengeance of them, was forbidden by every feeling of gratitude. By the solemn reverence he owed to the memory of the departed, and still, despite of the discovery he had made,

 believing

believing lord Sebergham not utterly destitute of noble feelings, what dagger, he asked himself, could inflict a wound so painful as the abashing detection of his perfidy?

But from dwelling uninterruptedly on this, his thoughts were prevented by the attention required by Hardwicke, whose situation became every moment more alarming.

The friar who attended the hasty summons to him, and who, to the holiness of the monk, united the skill of the leech, pronounced him to have received some internal bruises, that rendered it next to impossible he should recover.

His prediction was fulfilled: in the course of a few days, after the closest attendance from Edmund, and being repeatedly assured of his sincere forgiveness, for the plot he had entered into against him, he expired, amidst the united prayers of him and his companions for the repose of his troubled spirit.

The evening after his decease, he was interred in the consecrated enclosure of the monastery

monastery from which the priest had come who attended him in his last moments. The suddenness of his death, together with the circumstances that had led to it, would not permit Edmund to see him laid in the grave without emotion. Fearful, however, after what had passed, to shed a tear upon it might be construed into hypocrisy, he checked the gushing drop; yet as he lingeringly departed, could not forbear repeating, as if the words rudely notched upon the wooden cross he had ordered to be placed at its head, "*Requiescat in pace!*"

An accurate judge of the workings of a tender mind, sir Roland clearly perceived what was passing in his; but aware that to notice his emotion would be to augment it, he prudently forbore appearing to do so. In silence almost uninterrupted, they retraced their way back to the Castle; but just as they were about entering it, a kind of shuddering sensation caused Edmund involuntarily to pause, and sir Roland took advantage of the circumstance to

ask him to prolong his walk; but soon the stillness of the scene, the mild gloom of the twilight paths, where, from the thickness of the verdure, scarce a footfall could be heard, while, through the boles of the tall trees, groves of richest hues were seen thronging upon groves, from whose deep shades, awfully congenial to the feelings of melancholy, the melodious song of the nightingale came thrilling to the ear, had a soothing effect upon his mind, such as gradually enabled him again to enter into conversation.

He had previously avowed his determination of hastening back to England, so soon as the fate of Hardwicke was decided; and now reverting to the subject of his return, sir Roland repeated his promise of accompanying him, and readily agreed to let their journey be commenced the next day.

In consequence, he proceeded to finish his story, with the whole of which he wished him acquainted ere they set out.

Resuming it—"You will recollect," said he, "I broke off just as I was on the point of

of making known to you the incident that brought me acquainted with Edward.

"At the battle of Wakefield, stigmatized by so many barbarities, where the youthful Rutland and his royal father fell victims to the merciless fury of Margaret and her immediate adherents, as I was roving through the bloody field, I suddenly espied a youthful warrior, distinguished by the hostile badge of the York faction, holding unequal combat with two soldiers of the opposite party.

"Urged by a resistless impulse, I flew to his rescue; but in vain should I have striven to shield him from his fierce assailants, but for the sudden approach of a superior number of his own party; at this the others fled, and I was following, when, seizing my arm — 'Stop, gallant stranger,' said he whom I had thus saved, 'to receive the thanks due to your humanity. Fortune now frowns, but she may yet nevertheless smile again; and should this be the case, rely on it you'll find you have not obliged

 a person

a person who will forget a service. Know that he who now addresses you is Edward of York! take this signet,' pulling a ring from his finger, and putting it on mine, 'and should it ever be in my power to grant a favour, but produce it, and on the honour of a soldier, I swear there is nothing you may ask I will not grant.'

"Relying on this promise, I sought your mother, after the fatal overthrow of the adherents of Lancaster at Barnet, in order to know whether I should avail myself of it for her; but all my endeavours to discover her proved vain; and in consequence, concluding she had retired amidst her own immediate connexions, who, in due course of time, would make whatever exertions she might need, I no longer delayed returning to France, whither I was now called by a motive of duty.

"The wretch who followed me to England, for the purpose of aggravating my misfortunes, by taking advantage of my unhappy situation, returned hither, with a plausible

plausible excuse for his abrupt departure hence.

"In the course of time, he was seized with a lingering disorder, which at length awakening reflections that had before lain dormant, he sent to request the attendance of my mother at his bedside; and on her complying with his entreaty, proceeded to disclose, not only his own villany, but the dreadful particulars I have previously revealed to you.

"She heard him with equal astonishment and horror; for through the watchfulness of the count, she had, till then, been kept in entire ignorance of the cause of the fatal catastrophe that had plunged her in everlasting grief, and, by his contrivance also, led to believe, that in crossing the Adriatic from Venice, I had perished in a sudden storm.

"But the tumultuous transport imparted to her maternal feelings, by the knowledge of my being still in existence, was quickly damped by the cruel reflection of the situ-

ation in which I was placed. To endure this with any degree of patience was beyond her power, and in consequence, she was compelled to the divulgement of a secret she had, till then, resolved on carrying with her to the grave, namely, that I was not her son by the count Montbrison, but the offspring of a previous marriage, formed under the most inauspicious circumstances, and quickly dissolved by death.

"An attachment had grown up between her and a youth of illustrious rank, but which her father, not less arbitrary and tyrannical than him to whose arms he afterwards doomed her, in a fit of caprice suddenly interdicted.

"But their hearts were too firmly united to permit them to obey the cruel mandate. In private they received the nuptial benediction; soon after which, the bridegroom was called away to the wars, leaving her in a state that, had circumstances been different, would have been a source of joy to her.

"While

"While hoping for happier times, she received the cruel tidings of her husband's death in the field of battle. When the first transports of her grief were over, she resolved on for ever keeping concealed the tie that had united them, lest its disclosure should, from the vindictive rancour of her father, be productive of injury to her unhappy infant.

"Scarcely had she become a mother, ere she was again compelled to become a wife. About the birth of her first child by the count Montbrison, he was called away to a distant province, on business that it was concluded would detain him for a long period from home.

"Of his long absence the countess availed herself, through the assistance of the confidential domestic who had been the means of enabling her to keep secret whatever she wished to conceal, to visit the issue of her first unfortunate marriage, in a lonely cottage in the Maconnois, under the care of a woodman's wife.

"While

"While here indulging her maternal tenderness, the infant of the count Montbrison suddenly expired, and his death immediately suggested to her the design of adopting me in his place—a design which, from the length of time she was aware the count would be absent, she conceived might well be carried into effect, and thus an opportunity afforded her of shielding me from the numerous ills she otherwise saw me probably exposed to.

"That the contemplation of these was a justification of the design, I will not pretend to say; yet, in the eyes of some, perhaps, it may be considered an extenuation of it. Every thing succeeded as she wished it; I was embraced as his son by the count Montbrison on his return, and educated by him in a manner worthy of the supposition.

"But no consideration could now induce this unhappy mother longer to conceal what she deemed so essential to me to have known. To be informed I was not the son of the count Montbrison would be all

that

that was requisite, she conceived, to induce me to vindicate my innocence, and guard myself against being any otherwise involved in the terrible consequences of his atrocious crime.

"But I was not equally regardless of what must ensue from such a procedure—the injury it must do her fame—the terrible strictures it must occasion; and accordingly resolved on seeking a private interview with her, for the purpose of avowing my fixed determination of never availing myself of the secret she had disclosed.

"By my faithful Jacques it was communicated. He was early chosen by me an immediate attendant on my person, and accordingly accompanied me on my travels. On quitting Venice, expecting shortly to be there again, I left him behind me. He remained there, till a rumour of what had happened at Montbrison began to spread through the city, owing to the intelligence conveyed by the lady Laura to her friend donna Claudia, when, all alarm and anxiety,

iety, he set out for this. But notwithstanding all he heard here, his faith in my principles was not to be shaken; and from the doubts he evidently entertained of my guilt, the count would have expelled him the Castle, but for the soothing effect his attentions had upon the disconsolate countess.

"No sooner had she resolved on the disclosure I have just revealed, than she decided on making Jacques her messenger, aware she could not possibly find a trustier one. The diligence with which he sought me out justified her opinion of his zeal and fidelity, and gave me an additional motive for regarding him.

"With him in disguise, I returned hither, but alas! not to receive the embrace I fondly anticipated. The agitation excited by the unexpected communication made her was too much for the exhausted frame of my unhappy mother; previously weakened as it was, by horror for the fate of my sister, and grief for me, she quickly sunk beneath

beneath her feelings, raving upon me in her last moments, and calling upon Heaven to protect me from becoming a victim to the crimes of the count.

"The shock imparted to his feelings by her sudden death, or rather the knowledge betrayed in her last moments of his atrocity, threw the count into a state that soon proved equally fatal. The punishment due to his guilt he could not help thinking now approaching, and sunk under the horrible apprehension. In his expiring moments, his tortured heart was opened to his confessor, a holy monk of the neighbouring convent of St. Benoit, and the same who attended the unfortunate Hardwicke in his. With him he left it in charge to desire my forgiveness for him; and a deed, entitling me to all he himself possessed, in his own right and my mother's.

"The latter was all I thought proper to accept; to the disposal of the holy father I left the other part of his bequest, and to whom,

whom, in the conference that ensued after my arrival, I so fully explained the motives that induced me to determine on remaining passive under the imputation cast upon me, as to incline him to acknowledge he conceived me right.

"In the first place, I knew I could not attempt the vindication of my fame, without exposing to lasting censure the revered memory of my unfortunate mother, and, in the next, owing to the proneness of mankind to lean to the unfavourable side; from that levelling wish, which the consciousness of secret failings and frailties excites, I dreaded the public exposure such an attempt must occasion answering no other end than that of rendering me a new theme for discourse.

"Yet had I thought it could have restored to me that happiness I had lost, perhaps I should have been tempted to have made it; but alas! that was now impossible. Claudia, my loved Claudia, had given herself

self to the arms of another, and the friends I had previously possessed were all either alienated or dispersed.

"Among those I had to lament was the gentle Laura; from the Castle of Montbrison, whither, to the last, she accused me of having conducted her, with the most terrible intent, she took refuge in a convent, where an insidious disorder, that had grown up with her from her infancy, and, like a canker in the bud, preyed on her beauteous frame without injuring its exterior loveliness, shortly terminated her mortal career, to the blighting of the fond hopes of the young Pisani, and the destruction of the exulting ones of the idolizing father, who, under the idea of her death being hastened by the opposition shewn to her wishes, sunk beneath the grief it inflicted.

"Thus did the fortune of the family revert again to the right heir; but under what circumstances? when haunted by the reflection of a dreadful crime, he dreaded the encounter of any mortal eye! and thus

was

was another proof afforded of the unerring justice of Heaven, and the terrible consequences that result from man's impatience.

"Had the count steadily resisted the impulse of revenge, and patiently awaited the will of Heaven, he would at length have found himself in the tranquil enjoyment of his rightful inheritance; but in his eagerness to accomplish his wishes, he completely defeated them.

"The Castle became deserted immediately after his decease, owing to the horror excited by the the dreadful catastrophe that had taken place within it, and the superstitious fancies to which it had given rise.

"But to me, as the only home I had ever known, it still continued to be a place I was attached to; for such is the blissful happiness of childhood, that whatever can revive that period in our recollection is interesting to our feelings.

"I could not view its old towers without being almost tempted to hail them as a safe asylum,

asylum, from the remembrances it awakened; nor was it perhaps less pleasing to me, from the melancholy it allowed me to indulge, for here was no danger of the reflections excited by my singular story being interrupted. In a word, such was the kind of secret spell that bound me to it, that I again took up my abode within its lonely walls, but without entrusting the secret of my having done so to any one but my friend father Pierre, or doing any thing to betray it to others, suffering every thing to remain in the same state of desolation they were left in on its abandonment after the death of the count, and confining myself to the occupation of two or three chambers in one of the old towers, well secured by intricate passages.

"But though I liked to have it for what I called my home, I did not entirely sequester myself in it. Accompanied by my faithful Jacques, whom nothing could induce to leave me, I have been in the habit of journeying, from time to time, to other places,

places, since it again became my habitation; but alas! no longer with that stimulating curiosity, that eager expectation, which once incited me to travel.

"More than once, as a pilgrim, have I bowed at the shrine of our lady of Loretto, and visited Monserrat—wandered to the birth-place of Virgil, and offered up my vows in the church consecrated by St. Benedict himself.

"Once was I tempted to review the scenes I had visited in early youth; but ah! how dreadful were the feelings excited by the review! how bitter the anguish, when on chance throwing my once-loved, and still tenderly-remembered Claudia in my way, I beheld her surrounded with a set of playful cherubs, and reflected that, but for the singularity of my unfortunate fate, I might have been the happy father of the smiling group!

"Ah! after this sight, how doubly dismal did my lonely home appear, where, unmolested, the owl screamed her melancholy

choly vespers, and all was eternal gloom and silence!

"Yet when I thought on the brevity of human life, the short period that would elapse ere I should pass away, and lose the afflicting recollections that now oppressed me, I strove to regain composure.

'Ah! where,' I cried, 'are the anxious beings, whose bosoms, within these walls, were, but a short time ago, the seat of all the tumultuous passions? how silent is now their repose! Unmindful of the beam that plays over the marble of their tombs, they sleep reckless of the cares that once agitated them.'

"To rove through their well-remembered haunts, to stray beneath the shades that had waved over them, to sit ruminating upon the seats they once had pressed, was a favourite indulgence. Ah! in how many ways does the pensive spirit seek to feed its melancholy!

"I was returning from one of my lonely walks, when the unexpected discovery of

of you and your companion excited a degree of alarm that induced me to think caution necessary; accordingly I fled, and by means of a trap-door, that, by the pressure of a spring, descended to the foot of a subterraneous staircase, and reverted immediately again to its original place, avoided your close pursuit.

"Anxious, however, to ascertain what you were, that if needing assistance I might render it, I lost no time in alarming Jacques, and hastening back with him.

"The noise you made in forcing the door by which you imagined I had escaped, guided us to the spot where you were, and where we were not a little shocked, as were you, no doubt, by the ghastly spectacle we there beheld.

"The only conjecture I can form on the subject is, that the skeleton was that of a man in one of the adjacent villages, who, about two years ago, committed an atrocious murder, and who, being closely pursued, took refuge, probably, in the Castle; and

and not knowing how, perhaps, to unfasten the door by which he had secured himself, miserably perished with hunger; if so, may his sufferings have been considered some atonement for his crime!

"But be it so or not, the bones have received solemn interment, and a certain number of masses have already been said for the repose of the spirit that once animated them.

"Erring beings as we are, we are bound in charity to pray for one another. He who enters into the sorrows of his species, and offers up his vows for their repose, experiences a sweet alleviation of his own, and a soothing feeling of tranquillity.

"By angels caught, all hallow'd, as they flow,
Are tears we shed for sorrows not our own;
And bosoms heaving with another's woe,
Waft their own incense to the Heavenly Throne."

The intelligent looks of Edmund rendered it unnecessary for him to declare his concurrence in these sentiments. His eyes

beamed with sensibility; and in the pensive smiles that now and then irradiated his countenance, there was an indescribable sweetness, fully illustrative of his heart being the seat of feeling.

Sir Roland proceeded to discuss the manner in which he meant to proceed in his petition to the king—"But as all earthly hopes are liable to disappointment," he continued, "should my application for you prove unavailing, you must return hither, and, striving to forget the country from whose bosom implacable resentment has driven you, exert the advantages you so eminently possess, to secure yourself a happy destiny in this. Though long sequestered, lost to the world, I may say, yet still I am not without a hope that it might be in my power to advance your interest here."

Edmund turned pale at the possibility of a disappointment being suggested; quickly, however, checking the emotion it gave rise to, he thanked sir Roland with grateful warmth for the zeal he evinced for him—

"When

"When I think of all that has recently occurred," he added, "how forcibly am I struck with the benevolent goodness of Providence! for how ill could I have borne up against the detected treachery of lord Sebergham, but for my so unexpectedly finding a friend in you! Well, indeed, may we say, from what has come to pass, that out of seeming evil often cometh good."

"True," assented sir Roland; "in the snare which he privately laid for others, is the foot of the wicked himself often entangled. To rely upon Heaven is to be certain of its protection. The eye that never slumbereth or sleepeth, that pervades all space —that eye is for ever upon him who makes Providence his trust."

"Soothing persuasion!" said Edmund. "Oh, never may my bosom lose the support and consolation it bestows!"

"Never, I trust!" responded sir Roland emphatically. "Keep steady in virtue, and

 let

let what will happen, you cannot be utterly miserable."

In this manner they continued to converse some little time longer: Edmund then proceeded to open his heart more fully to his new friend than he had before done, by acquainting him with every particular relating to the fair heiress of Trecothick, and his reason for not placing the same confidence in lord Sebergham — "Acquainted," he said, "with his passionate admiration of beauty, and accustomed to see him follow, unresistingly, the bent of inclination, I feared apprising him of the existence of such consummate loveliness, lest of raising to myself a rival in him; yet perhaps I was wrong in yielding to this distrust of his principles; he may, perhaps, deem himself justified, in some degree, by it, for acting as he has done."

"Impossible!" rejoined sir Roland; "if his principles were really steady, where there is real integrity, no pretext will be caught at for a departure from it."

Edmund

Edmund could not avoid subscribing to this opinion—silently he did so, however; for such was the lingering tenderness he felt for lord Sebergham, such the veneration he held the memory of his father in, that he could not, notwithstanding the provocation he had given him, bear to utter an expression that had a tendency to make him more unfavourably thought of.

CHAP. II.

———Through his youthful face
Wrath checks the beauty, and sheds manly grace;
Both in his looks so join'd, that they might move
Fear ev'n in friends, and from an en'my love.

COWLEY.

PREPARATIONS being made over night for the departure of the little party, at an early hour in the morning they commenced their journey; and after a pleasant one of some days, at length reached Calais, without the experience of one misadventure whatever; and presently embarking, were soon wafted over, by a brisk wind, to the opposite coast.

The uncertainty of what awaited him here, the idea of his fate being now drawing

ing to a crisis, occasioned such emotion in the mind of Edmund on his landing, as nearly took from him the power of proceeding.

Sir Roland perceiving by his varying cheek, alternately exhibiting, as it flushed and faded, the different tints of the rose, and the agitation of his air, what was passing in his mind, endeavoured to divert his thoughts, as taking him by the arm he led him towards an inn.

Having reached one, refreshment was called for; and while bringing in, "This," said sir Roland, suddenly, "is the identical place in which I met with the adventure that first introduced me to the notice of your noble father—that generous spirit to whom to be unfortunate was a certain recommendation. Ah! how unlike the cold calculating sons of selfishness, still turning aside from the pilgrim and the stranger in their path of woe! In what lively colours is every circumstance of the scene impressed upon my memory! It

seems to me as if it were but yesterday that I was driven hence, a wretched fugitive, compelled to renounce one country, and ignominiously scorned by another—oh! noble Lestwithiel, dear, inestimable friend! thou whose loss I have never ceased to deplore, whose name I have never been able to utter without tears of gratitude, how dreadful would have been my fate but for thy interposition! and how rapturous will be my feelings, should I be able, in some degree, to requite what I owe thee, by serving thy son!"

A tear, as with a tremulous hand he pressed his arm, was the only way in which Edmund could reply to this speech, such was the fullness of heart it occasioned.

After they had refreshed themselves, finding they could not procure as many horses as they needed until the next day, the evening being invitingly fine, they strolled out to amuse themselves with the curiosities of the place. Having viewed the Castle, and the old church, said to have been

been erected by Lucius, the first Christian king of Britain, together with the Pharos, or Roman Watch Tower, they next proceeded to examine the venerable church of St. Martin, founded by Wightrea, king of Kent, the Priory, and Hospital, or Maison Dieu, as it was more generally called, opposite to it, in which the knights hospitallers, or templars, found accommodation in coming in and going out of the kingdom, and then pursued their walk along the beach. At length coming to a tremendous cliff, "whose high and bending head looked fearfully on the deep below," they stopt.

"Here it was," said sir Roland, after pausing a minute, evidently through emotion, "here it was," laying his hand upon the rock, "that bursting with conflicting feelings, on my expulsion from the inn, I threw myself.

"The outrage committed on them made me view every thing with a savage eye of disgust, and fancy all frowned on me. Me-

thought the beetling cliffs hung threatening over my head, and ominous clouds upon the opposite hills; but scarce had the conciliating voice of friendship reached my ear, ere all seemed changed; so wonderfully does the mind tincture external objects, so much do the impressions they make depend upon the existing feelings of the moment. The savage aspect of the precipices softened into sublime grandeur, the haziness of the opposite coast disappeared, and the surge that but the instant before seemed to dash with angry violence against the rocks, now appeared gently breaking on the pebbled shore."

Edmund well knew what the effect of acute feeling was, and, if possible, loved sir Roland better for the congeniality of sentiment and similarity of disposition he saw existing between them. Nothing, indeed, can be more delightful than the society of those who, from their own, are able to judge of our feelings, and make allowances for the little weaknesses and caprices

into which an excess of sensibility sometimes betrays, and which, by appearing to humour, is the surest way of vanquishing; for the mind, rendered sore by affliction, like the body smarting from wounds, will naturally shrink back and recoil within itself from those who rudely attempt a cure.

The beauty of the varied prospect that met their view as they advanced towards Folkstone, the freshness of the air, the pleasing pensiveness imparted by the melancholy sound of the murmuring surge, the splendors of the evening sky, fired by the rays of the setting sun, and tinging with dazzling hues the waves, contributed to induce the friends to continue their stroll, till, like the visions of hope from the languid mind of age, the scene began to fade upon their sight.

The feathered tenants of the cliffs, with hoarse screamings, were beginning to seek their respective nests within them, ere they again found themselves at the inn. Their departure was fixed for an early hour the

next morning; and punctual to the time appointed, their journ ey was commenced by dawn of day.

Nevertheless they could not, on account of the horses, reach their destination till towards the decline of the second. On their way, they stopt to make an offering at the shrine of St. Becket, and implore a happy termination to the business undertaken by sir Roland.

The last rays of the sun were gilding, with a mild radiance, the stately cross of Eleanor, when they alighted at the little village of Charing, for the purpose of putting up there, from its contiguity to the residence of lord Sebergham, looking upon the Thames, and adjacent to the old residence of John of Gaunt, the scene of many a splendid revel in the days of his illustrious father, when, in compliment to the royal prisoners there, it was the frequent custom of the court to repair thither, in stately barges, from the palace at Westminster.

All

All here was too well known to Edmund not to excite feelings, as he alighted, that nearly swelled his heart to bursting. Not a spot but was familiar to him—the broad road, leading in front of the little inn where they put up, to the Abbey and the Palace, the pleasant lanes and meadows behind the inn, where kine now lowed, and where he had often sauntered to listen to the vernal notes of the cuckoo, and inhale the sweetness of the bursting hawthorn; and, in consequence, recollections were revived that nearly overpowered him—recollections of the period in which implicitly believing in the assurances that were made him, he saw nothing before him but a smiling prospect; now, how changed! hung with the clouds of doubt and apprehension, from the discovery of the treachery practised against him.

All zeal and activity, sir Roland, having secured a lodging, and made him refresh himself, dispatched Jacques to make the

necessary

necessary inquiry at the mansion of lord Sebergham concerning him. For this, the shrewdness and fidelity of Jacques rendered him well qualified. Though lord Sebergham had given instructions that no particular inquiries, for the present, respecting him should be answered, he nevertheless succeeded in obtaining the information he required.

Leaning against the memento of the royal Edward's conjugal affection, the pillar abovementioned, Edmund anxiously watched for his return, in a state of perturbation that almost precluded him from joining in sir Roland's conversation, suggested by the spot, relative to the high achievements of that gallant prince, and his adventures in Palestine.

At length Jacques was beheld approaching, and both eagerly hastening to meet him, were informed, that after being a few days at his house, near the Savoy, lord Sebergham had again departed for Cornwall,

for

for the express purpose, it was shrewdly suspected, of having his nuptials solemnized.

Fired with rage and jealousy, Edmund determined on immediately pursuing him — a determination that sir Roland did not attempt to oppose, from a conviction of the inutility of such an attempt. He forbore not, however, saying whatever he thought likely to moderate his transports, and obtained a promise from him of hastening back, as soon as ever, one way or other, his fears respecting the fair Emmeline were ended.

In the meantime, he assured him he should be indefatigable in prosecuting his suit for him, and now proposed a stroll to the Palace, for the purpose of inquiring concerning the lord Pendennis, a nobleman belonging to the royal household, and who, through the introduction of lord Lestwithiel, having particularly noticed him ere the commencement of the civil broils, he conceived the idea of applying to for an

immediate

immediate introduction to the king, a consultation with Edmund on the subject inducing him to believe he should find it difficult to obtain the audience he required, without some little exertion of interest.

This was a proposal Edmund could not decline, though, from the extreme agitation of his mind, he trembled in every nerve. Not wishing, however, to be seen by any one at present who might recognise him, he withdrew his arm on coming within sight of the Palace, and telling him he would await his joining him in the cloisters of the Abbey, proceeded thither.

Leaning against the Gothic porch, for the benefit of the evening air, sir Roland had the good fortune to encounter a page, who readily answered the inquiry he had to make, by informing him that the lord Pendennis was then absent at one of his seats in the country, but probably would be back in a few days.

Hastening to his young friend with this agreeable intelligence, sir Roland found him

him pensively pacing the solitary cloisters, now almost involved in darkness; and the gloom and deathlike stillness of which were rendered still more striking, by the contrasting scene he had just come from, where, in the magnificent hall that once witnessed the royal hospitality of the unfortunate Richard, the numerous servants of the Palace assembled at this evening hour, were jocosely chatting and laughing in groups over the occurrences of the day.

Ere the lark had well given intimation of the dawn, Edmund was on horseback. In his former visit to Cornwall, chance had given him an opportunity of serving the family of a poor woodman, whose cottage stood contiguous to the domain of lord Trecothick, to which, for the purpose of greater secrecy, now purposing to take up his abode there, he, at the earnest request of the anxious sir Roland, gave him a particular direction, that in case any thing occurred to give him uneasiness concerning

him,

him, he might know where to seek for information.

Alarmed by hearing nothing of Hardwicke, whom he had positively commanded either to hasten back, or else find some means of letting him hear from him, lord Sebergham presently decided on speeding back to Cornwall, for the purpose of watching Emmeline, and being on the spot against her father returned, to press the immediate celebration of their union.

In the hope of this being yet a little longer delayed was all that was now capable of imparting a moment's ease to the oppressed heart of the wretched Emmeline.

Every day deepening her regret for the past, her nights were often spent in melancholy vigils—her days in lonely wanderings. She was sitting one evening, about sunset, just at that hour when the air begins to hold that solemn stillness that renders so impressive the approaching gloom, amidst the ruins of a Druid's temple, in

one

one of the wildest and loneliest parts of the domain, where the fallen stones, half sunk in the long, luxuriant grass, gave to the spot the air of a neglected burial-place, when, from a mournful meditation, she was roused by a slight noise behind her, and turning her head, she beheld lord Seberg-ham approaching through the interstices of the ruin.

Leaving his retinue at the Abbey at Launceston, he had sought her in secret, for the purpose of taking her by surprise, and thus being better able to ascertain whether there was any occasion for the vague fears that had began to agitate him.

The dismay of Emmeline at his sight was too great to be concealed, and too indicative of feelings inimical to his wishes not to excite in him the most violent emotions.

"I see," he cried, suddenly stopping short, within a few paces of her; and after surveying her for a moment with a smile of bitterness, "I see," in a supercilious tone, "that my presence here has been as little welcome

welcome as expected; but not much longer will I tamely bear this repelling coldness—no, the right which the lady Emmeline has given me to her smiles, by Heaven! I will enforce—to her father I will appeal—he will not, I know, permit her to continue trifling with the feelings of honourable love, or treat, with repulsive disdain, the man whom she voluntarily allowed to look forward to calling her his!"

Emmeline shuddered.—"Do you make no allowances," she asked, in tremulous tones, and with downcast eyes, "for the depression of mind I at present labour under? in the season of grief, how impossible is it to assume the semblance of joy!"

"Assume!" repeated the irritated Sebergham, indignantly, "oh! did you really love—did any thing like the passion I feel warm your breast—joy, rapture, would be its spontaneous emotion at this meeting; but again I repeat, even with my sword will I maintain the right you have given me to your affections—no human power, I swear,

I swear, shall rob me of you—mine you are by promise—mine by voluntary betrothment—and mine you shall speedily be by the solemn rites of the church; for beyond the period of your father's return I am determined not to suffer our nuptials to be delayed."

Again Emmeline shuddered; gushing into tears—"This violence is cruel," she cried. "I did conceive, during the period of mourning, I should have been left to the unmolested indulgence of my sorrows; nor can I avoid evincing some little regret at finding myself mistaken."

Unable calmly to endure the sight of her tears, the impetuous Sebergham suddenly threw himself at her feet—"Oh, forgive," in the most impassioned accents he exclaimed, "forgive the intemperate warmth of wounded tenderness! but ah! should I not be unworthy of the love of such a being, could I patiently support an appearance of indifference? Had I perceived the faintest gleam of pleasure kindle in those lovely

eyes

eyes at beholding me, how different would have been my feelings! how great my gratitude! even still will it be unbounded, if you but say you forgive what has passed."

Emmeline, though shocked by his violence, was yet but too conscious, from the coldness of her manner, there was cause for reproach, not to be induced to suppress the resentment it had occasioned. Extending her hand to raise him—"Let it be no more thought of," she said.

Passionately kissing this fair token of reconciliation, lord Sebergham rose from his kneeling attitude, and on composure being a little restored, proceeded to inform her of his having stopt at the Abbey of Launceston, with an intention of remaining there till the return of her father, but at the same time also, with a hope of being daily allowed to visit her.

Emmeline was too apprehensive of exasperating him again, and confirming the jealous doubts she saw had taken possession of his mind, to attempt disappointing this hope.

hope. Compelled to consider him as the arbiter of her future fate, she conceived it absolutely necessary to evince some little complaisance towards him.

But never was an effort attended with so much pain as the one she made for the purpose, so repugnant to every feeling was the idea of admitting his assiduities; but she had doomed herself to receive them, and to repine at the compulsion she had voluntarily incurred she knew would be unavailing.

He accompanied her back to the Castle; and on coming within sight of it, took his leave, with an intimation, that on the ensuing day he should visit her in form there.

Left again to the indulgence of her reflections, how still more agonizing did she find them rendered by this interview, depriving her, as it did, of all hope of a much longer respite from the fate she dreaded!—how in agony of soul deplore the past, regret the pride and vanity that had led her to form an engagement which every moment rendered more revolting to her thoughts!

thoughts! but his she saw she must be; and kneeling, she supplicated Heaven to enable her to bear the thought with composure, and, for the sake of her father, fulfil, in a becoming manner, the new duties that would be imposed upon her by her change of situation.

The violence betrayed by lord Sebergham in the recent meeting had excited a dread of him she could not conquer, and which of course rendered the idea of becoming his still more intolerable—"Ah!" she involuntarily exclaimed, "would Lestwithiel so have conducted himself, had he intruded on me in such a moment?—oh no! respecting the sorrow he saw me under, no impetuous expression would have been suffered to escape his lips; and soothed by his gentleness, I should have felt an alleviation of grief; but I have voluntarily forfeited all right to his sympathy—voluntarily, perfidiously broken an engagement that might now have been a source of happiness to me."

Her

Her tears were renewed at the reflection, and but for the idea of her father, she would have been unequal to make an effort to struggle against despair.

Stimulated by this to make exertions, the moment the approach of lord Sebergham to the Castle was announced the next day, she hastened to the hall to receive him. He came attended by a splendid retinue, and not an eye that fell upon him but hers, but what confessed him worthy of admiration, so noble was his mien, so courteous his demeanour, as in alighting he bowed around him—so animated the expression that the glow of rapture imparted to his countenance.

Bowing upon the fair hand she extended to receive him, he led the lady Emmeline to an inner apartment, where, while they sat conversing, his retinue were feasted in the hall. In this visit of form, chiefly intended for the purpose of announcing his arrival in the neighbourhood in a proper manner at the Castle, he did not omit

 repeating

repeating his expectation of being allowed to see her whenever he pleased, and in which, though most reluctantly, she forced herself to acquiesce.

CHAP.

609.

CHAP. III.

Think you behold him like a raging lion,
Pacing the earth, and tearing up his steps,
Fate in his eyes, and roaring with the pain
Of burning fury. OTWAY.

OF her extorted permission he availed himself to pass almost every moment with her. As usual, he was mounting his steed one morning at the Abbey gate, for the purpose of proceeding to the Castle, when an unknown person, who disappeared the moment he had performed his commission, slipt a narrow scroll of paper into his hand, which, on unrolling, he found to contain a line, purporting, that in a particular part of the domain of Trecothick, he would find a person waiting to give him some tidings of Hardwicke.

That this was Hardwicke himself instantly struck him, who, under the idea of his wishing him to be cautious, had, he conceived, devised this method of obtaining a conference with him.

Impatient beyond expression for this, he hastily sprung upon his steed, and countermanding his attendants, proceeded alone to the gloomy spot, in which he suffered himself to believe he should find the racking anxiety he had lately laboured under terminated.

Arrived beneath the shade of the o'er-hanging boughs, here so thickly interwoven as scarce to permit the eye to penetrate through them, he felt somewhat disappointed at seeing no one. He was not long, however, suffered to remain in a state of suspense; as he looked anxiously round him, he heard a sudden rustling amidst the foliage, and the next instant Edmund stood before him.

Had a spectre met his sight at the moment,

ment, he probably could not have felt more horror-struck. In unutterable confusion he recoiled on his horse, and felt his colour change.

Edmund, seizing the reins, looked piercingly at him for a minute without speaking; then in a tone of bitter anguish, "Oh, what, what," he exclaimed, "would have been the feelings of thy noble father, had he lived to witness this humiliating moment—had he lived to behold his son, he in whose imagined virtues he so prided himself, shrinking and abashed beneath the consciousness of guilt!"

Making an effort to recover himself—"Who dares accuse me of guilt?" cried the agitated Sebergham.

"He who can convict you of it," returned Edmund. "I dare accuse you of it—I dare defy you to disprove the charge. On the confession of your confidant I accuse you of the basest treachery, the cruelest and most unwarrantable plot against me."

 "What?"

"What! the confession of Hardwicke?" he involuntarily demanded.

"Yes, of Hardwicke." Then in order to prove beyond a doubt that he was fully apprized of his perfidy, he proceeded to relate all that had passed between him and Hardwicke, concluding with the mention of his death.

"He was a villain!" said lord Seberg-ham, in a tone of spiteful malignancy.

"He was," said Edmund, calmly, "or he could not have undertaken what you required; but he died repentant, and ex-periences, therefore, I hope and believe, the mercy of Heaven. Bitter was the an-guish occasioned by the destruction of the confidence he was the means of destroying —painful the idea of thinking I should be compelled to raise the blush of shame up-on the cheek of the son of my protector, him to whom I owe such obligations; but though the consideration of these, the gratitude and veneration I feel for his me-mory, incline me to forbearance, they

cannot

cannot enjoin me to a passive submission of my wrongs. You must resign your basely-acquired pretensions to the daughter of Trecothick, or else consent to be branded for a base deserter of the solemn trust reposed by a dying father."

"Unparalleled insolence!" exclaimed the wrathful Sebergham, in a transport of fury; but suddenly checking himself, "in consideration of the protection you enjoyed, I pass it over."

"'Tis well," said Edmund; "but it would have been still better if you had suffered that consideration also to prevent your assigning me a lodging in your castle on the Rhone."

"Ha!" again exclaimed the furious Sebergham; "check this audacity, or by Heaven I cannot answer for what I may be tempted to do."

"Emmeline must be resigned," said Edmund, "or other weapons than words had recourse to, to avenge my injuries."

"Resigned!" repeated lord Sebergham, with

with a deriding laugh; "what, for thee? and suppose she were this instant free, hast thou the presumption, the folly, to imagine that on thee she would ever smile—on thee bestow her hand—thee, the fallen heir of a ruined house—thee, the dependant on precarious bounty? Away with such idle hopes!" scornfully waving his hand; "wake from the delusive dream that has engendered them; and bending thy spirit to thy fortune, look elsewhere for an union. As to thy threat of branding me with infamy, I smile at it as at the suggestion of impotent malice; for against my word, what would thine avail? against mine, thy assertion?"

"Perhaps but little," returned Edmund, with the same calmness he had before spoken, "for truth, I know, sometimes, in this world, needs adventitious aids to obtain it credit; but though, on the mere testimony of thy word, though mightest not be condemned, yet on that of thine own hand and signet," producing from his

bosom the letter he had received from Hardwicke, "thinkest not thou wouldst!"

The flush of arrogance faded from the cheek of Sebergham at sight of this incontrovertible proof of his guilt. He had tried to hope that on the mere word of Edmund alone there was a chance of escaping its imputation; but with such an evidence as this against him, he saw it to be impossible.

Rendered desperate by his fears, he instantly sprung from his horse, and with the fury of a lion, attempted to wrest it from him.

But resisting the effort, Edmund again secured it, and after a violent struggle, succeeded in throwing him to a distance from him; but only for a moment did he disengage himself from him. All was at stake to suffer him to detain this letter; and Sebergham saw was lost, fame, reputation, Emmeline. Maddened by the idea, the idea of everlasting infamy being attached to his name, he again rushed upon him.—

 "Traitor!"

"Traitor!" he cried, "never shalt thou escape with that execrable forgery!"

"Away!" said Edmund, indignantly, "nor aggravate thy baseness by premeditated falsehood; with life only will I part with this proof of thy perfidy."

"Then be it so," cried Sebergham; and yielding to the maddening impulse of the moment, he plunged his dagger into the bosom of the unguarded Edmund.

The violence with which he struck the blow occasioned him to stagger back a few paces as he drew forth the weapon; Edmund too staggered, but not, like him, to recover. Reeling back a few yards, he fell with a groan to the earth; Sebergham gazed on him with a kind of vacant wildness, but the sight of his bubbling blood, flowing in a crimson stream towards his feet, made him suddenly start aside. Reflection returned; he became horror-struck. "Edmund," he cried, bending over him, "in mercy speak!" He laid his hand on his shoulder, but no Edmund replied.—

"Oh

"Oh God!" in the trembling accents of despair he exclaimed, "have I murdered him? Edmund! Edmund! if thou canst hear, oh, in pity answer!" He attempted to turn him on his side, but the sight of his fair hair, dabbled in blood, made him again start away with horror. He was renewing the effort, when fancying he heard the sound of approaching steps, he instinctively started up, and mounting his horse, he rode off. But horror pursued him; every moment he expected to be overtaken, and seized as a murderer. Unwittingly he took the direction to the Castle; he started in unutterable confusion at the sight of it; but to retreat without alighting he saw to be impossible, in consequence of his having been perceived by some of the domestics.

With difficulty he dismounted, and with still greater reached a chair in the hall, where, overcome by his feelings, he fainted away.

Alarmed by the situation in which they

saw him, the wild and haggard expression of his countenance on entering the hall, the domestics summoned lady Emmeline thither.

She felt an involuntary shock at the sight that there met her view. The restoratives, however, which she promptly ordered, had soon the effect of restoring lord Sebergham to his senses. For a minute after regaining them, he looked wildly round without exactly knowing where he was; then more perfectly collecting himself, he again threw round a glance of terror; but no accusing countenance met his eye—no looks but what evinced anxiety and feeling; and in consequence he became more composed. "Since I have escaped so far," said he to himself, "all may yet be well."

The idea animated him to look up, and he encountered the mild eyes of Emmeline. He instantly rose—"Oh, how good this solicitude!" he said; "my heart must ever remain your debtor for it."

"By

"By no means," replied Emmeline; "in this instance I should condemn myself were I to have shown less attention; but to no accident, I hope, your sudden indisposition has been owing?"

The consciously-guilty Sebergham faltered, and looked confused. "No, to no accident," he with difficulty answered; "but—but to a sudden faintness that had come over him, owing, he conceived, to the closeness of the atmosphere."

"Perhaps so," returned Emmeline; "but methinks you change again—perhaps you might like to repose a little?"

He bowed assentingly, and leaning on the arm of one of the attendants, followed Emmeline to an apartment where she had been sitting, and where, in general, her retired moments were passed.

She pointed to a couch, on which sinking, he was for some minutes so exhausted by emotion, as to be unable to articulate the gratitude he felt for the tender attentions

attentions which, in the humanity of her heart, she paid him.

"You will soon, I hope, be better," she said, as, on seeing him a little revive, she took a seat. "Rest will, I make no doubt, be of service; and the balsamic sweets of the garden that breathe through this room, can scarcely fail of reviving your languid senses."

"Is it not your favourite apartment?" he demanded.

She bowed.

"Then must I feel more at ease in it; for the place inhabited by purity must, even by angels, almost be deemed a sanctuary."

She sighed—"Ah! if not happy in ourselves," said she, "what place can prove a sanctuary from care?"

A deep groan burst from the quivering lips of Sebergham, and for a moment he claspt his hands despairingly; then suddenly recollecting himself, he started up in a sitting attitude, and looking round him

with

with wildness—" The heat becomes more oppressive," he said; " something may be expected from the lurid state of the atmosphere."

Emmeline looked out, and saw big drops descending on the flowers, the certain precursors of a thunder-storm. In a short time the livid lightning began to flash, and the hoarse thunder to rattle in tremendous peals over their heads.

Emmeline drew back, and devoutly crossed herself; Sebergham shuddered, for conscious guilt had paralized his nerves, and made him tremble at these seeming indications of Heaven's wrath.

"How appalling!" he exclaimed, as the forked lightning continued to dart past him, and the thunder to peal over his head; " doth it not affright thee?"

" It awes me," replied Emmeline; " but knowing it cannot injure without the permission of Heaven, I strive against the terror it might otherwise inspire."

He gazed at her for a minute steadfastly, then

then starting up, he seized her hand, with a mingled expression of rapture and admiration, exclaiming—" Can there be danger when near thee!"

There was a wildness in his air and manner as he spoke, that startled Emmeline. Her look recalled him to recollection.

With an hysteric laugh—" You seem to think me strange to-day," he said, " and so I believe I am; for the illness I have been seized with has occasioned a painful confusion here," putting his hand to his forehead.

Emmeline again urged him to take a little rest—" I will not speak to you again," she said, turning away, and taking up a book, " till you have tried to do so."

Sebergham, in obedience to her commands, again threw himself on the couch, and rested his head on the pillow she had previously settled for him; but with difficulty could he so far command himself as to remain for any time in this state of inaction, startled, as he was, by every sound,

and

and expecting, as he did, every moment, to hear some terrible announcement of the horrible crime he had perpetrated.

At length the "full-distended clouds" began to pour their treasures on the fields; the rain continued for a considerable time without intermission, the sky then suddenly brightened, and again the face of Nature smiled, "the downward sun looking out effulgent from amid the broken clouds," while the beauty of the radiant scene was heightened by the full burst of music from the woods, "the distant bleatings of the hills," and answering lowings from the vales, as if all was gratitude for the refreshing moisture.

"How sweet the dewy verdure of the woods! how lovely the general aspect of all!" said Emmeline, involuntarily, as she bent from the window. "After being thus refreshed, a still more balmy sweetness is communicated to the air; and while the eye dwells enchanted on the glittering drops

drops that gem the foliage, and the varied colours of the grand ethereal bow, that seems bestriding earth, the heart is gladdened by the grateful joy that appears pervading Nature."

Lord Sebergham listened to her with a kind of vacant look, no longer able to enter into such feelings as hers; besides, he was ruminating on the steps he deemed it expedient immediately to take. With mingled sensations he had watched the rain; the earth saturated by it, he conceived he should find no great difficulty in preparing a space for the concealment of his victim; while from its heaviness, too, there was a probability of all traces of the blood he had shed being washed away from the sight of all, of all save Heaven; he shuddered; then suddenly starting up, prepared to depart, for no further time, he conceived, was to be lost. In his agitation, he found he had dropt the dagger with which the terible deed was committed, and lest it should fall into other hands,

hands, deemed it absolutely essential to his safety to set about the interment of the murdered youth directly.

Accordingly he took an abrupt leave of the lady Emmeline, who fatigued by the exertions she had been compelled to make on his account, and who, having previously made him take some refreshment, urged not his longer stay.

Speeding back to the Abbey, for the purpose of procuring a sword to dig the intended grave with, he muffled himself up in a large cloak, and passing out secretly by a private door in the cloisters, hastened to the spot where he had stamped himself a murderer.

With a repugnance that nothing could have conquered but a dread of what might ensue from drawing back, he approached it. By the gleams of a watery moon, through the wet foliage, he perceived the body lying exactly in the posture in which he had left it. He shuddered; and suddenly becoming sick, was compelled, for a minute,

nute, to lean against a tree for support; then rousing himself, he proceeded to the commencement of the terrible business he had undertaken.

But though the ground was softened, he nevertheless found this a more difficult matter than he had imagined, owing to the sliminess the rain occasioned; besides, he was every instant startled by the shuddering of the foliage, which, in this direction, was of a nature to be agitated by the slightest breeze, the ground being overgrown with a quantity of willows, aspins, and dogwood, owing to a number of rills here congregating and spreading in pools in various places.

At length his sword coming in contact with a stone, it snapt; thus, to his equal mortification and dismay, compelling him to leave unfinished what he had begun.

On leaving the half-dug grave, he proceeded to search for his dagger in the grass, when the imagined sounds of steps again impelled him to hurry from the spot.

Instinctively

Instinctively he fled it, nor paused till he again found himself within the Abbey walls.

But to renew his search for the dagger, and possess himself of the letter which Edmund retained, he resolved, should nothing unfortunate occur, to venture there the ensuing morning, though till night he could not think of completing the grave.

Accordingly, he was about quitting the Abbey the next day, when suddenly the lady Emmeline's squire, Godfrey, stood before him, bearing a kind inquiry from his lady relative to his health.

Having answered this, he trusted he should soon get rid of him; but he was disappointed. Perceiving him equipt for going out, and concluding his destination was to the Castle, Godfrey, in consequence of having long wished for a particular opportunity of recommending himself to his good graces, being one of those who are never without an eye to their own interest, humbly entreated permission to atttend

him

him thither. Not well knowing how to tell him he was under a mistake, lord Sebergham, after a little hesitation, granted him the permission, and mounting his horse, set forward for the Castle.

The consequences, however, which might result from delaying his original intention, were too obvious not to occasion a degree of agitation that rendered him unable to attend to the conversation of Godfrey, relative to the excellencies of the lady Emmeline, as the most pleasing subject, he conceived, he could possibly chuse.

Far, however, from appearing charmed, he continued to secretly wish him, as he ambled on his little poney by his side, fairly swimming down the Tamar, or else transplanted to the summit of one of the distant steeples that were seen in the landscape; but, like a burr in his skirts, Godfrey continued to keep close to him, not once losing sight of him till he had ushered him into the presence of the lady Emmeline.

There was a wildness in her looks that startled him the instant he cast his eyes on her, as rather confirmed the fearful misgiving that seized him on entering the hall, at perceiving a something of consternation in the appearance of the domestics.

"Nothing, I hope, has happened to disturb you?" he said, in tremulous accents, as he took her hand.

"Oh yes! something very dreadful," she answered, shuddering; "a murder has been committed in the woods, and the body has just been brought in here for examination and interment."

Lord Sebergham grasped her hands; he was compelled to do so to support himself. "A murder!" he repeated, in a hollow tone; "and the body brought hither!"

Emmeline looked fixedly at him for a moment—"I wonder not," she said, observing the ashy whiteness of his cheek, and the quivering of his lip, "at the emotion you betray. To hear of such crimes as this chills with horror; but the punishment due

due to such will yet, I make no doubt, overtake the cruel perpetrator of it. He had partly dug a grave for the concealment of his victim, which, I conclude, he was scared from completing, a convincing proof that murder is not to be hidden—that Providence itself interposes to bring about its discovery—that blood will have blood."

Lord Sebergham almost groaned; unconsciously he sank upon the chair from which she had risen to receive him, a cold dew hanging on his brow—"Such were the words of your father," he said, faintly, "even in this very apartment," as he cast a dim glance round him; "oh God! had I then——" He started; suddenly recollecting himself, and hastily rising, "but I entreat your pardon," he added, "for not better struggling against the effects of my late indisposition; it has left a strange confusion and weakness behind it; but in a little time, I hope I shall be perfectly recovered."

"You seem ill indeed," said lady Emmeline,

meline, in a tone of feeling; "methinks you should avoid all cause for emotion."

"Oh that I could!" he exclaimed, involuntarily and despairingly; then again recollecting himself—"Is it yet suspected or surmised," he suddenly demanded, "who the murderer or his victim was?"

Lady Emmeline replied in the negative—"But I make no doubt," she added, "from the diligent inquiries I have commanded, that both will soon be ascertained; in the meanwhile, for the purpose of facilitating the discovery, whoever wishes to see the body is to be permitted."

A sudden emotion of joy flushed the pale cheek of Sebergham; from this reply, he saw there was a chance of being yet able to save himself from utter ruin. With the person of Edmund he was pretty well aware none of the domestics of the Castle were acquainted; could he, therefore, keep it from the inspection of others, by prevailing on lady Emmeline to consent to his

his immediate interment, all might yet be well.

Reanimated by this hope, he immediately exerted himself for the purpose of obtaining it. "By allowing the body to remain here," he cried, "you subject yourself to the intrusion of vulgar curiosity; fond of shocking sights, you may rest assured there is not a person of that description in the neighbourhood who will not crowd hither, if you persist in doing so, to your extreme agitation: permit me to give orders, therefore, for its immediate removal, and whatever others I may deem necessary on the occasion."

Lady Emmeline hesitated a little—"Perhaps it might be as you say," she cried; "and at this period particularly, when my father is absent, I acknowledge any thing of tumult in the Castle would greatly agitate me."

"Then to avoid all danger of what you must doubtless dread, permit me to do as I request," said the wily Sebergham.

She

She bowed—" I consent," said she.

The anxious Sebergham scarcely paused to thank her for her condescension, so eager was he to take the steps his safety required.

Hastening to the hall, he called for the seneschal, and strictly commanding him, on no account whatever, to permit any one to enter the chamber in which the body was deposited, and for which he assigned the same specious reasons he had done to the lady Emmeline for recommending its immediate interment, he remounted his horse, and forthwith proceeded to the Abbey, for the purpose of giving the necessary orders for it.

CHAP. IV.

Thoughts succeed thoughts, like restless troubled waves
Dashing at one another. How.

Scarce was he gone, when still faint from recent emotion, the lady Emmeline strolled out by a private door from the Castle. She had not proceeded far, when, in a lone sequestered spot, she was suddenly accosted by a stranger with a packet in his hand.

Doffing his hat, and bowing down to her very shoe-strings, he humbly begged to know whether she would have the goodness to tell him where he might be likely to meet with the lord Sebergham?

After regarding him for a moment with a kind of vacant look, lady Emmeline replied, he would probably meet him at the

Abbey

Abbey of Launceston, whither he was just gone from the Castle.

"Just gone!" echoed the disappointed Hugh, for it was no other than Hugh Seagrove, the immediate attendant on the unfortunate Edmund, it may be remembered, who had now the honour of addressing the fair heiress of Trecothick.

Possessed of an insatiable portion of curiosity, he had long been on the watch for an opportunity of trying to discover what lord Sebergham was about, for about something he wished to conceal it was evident to him he was engaged, from the air of mystery that had accompanied his every proceeding, from the period of his receiving the communication relative to Edmund, and for whose sudden disappearance Hugh was at quite as great a loss to account as for his conduct.

But unremitting as was his watchfulness, he nevertheless remained without a pretext for the purpose, till furnished with

one by the delivery of a packet at the residence of lord Sebergham in the metropolis, which, the messenger who left it said, required immediate attention, and of which ultimately he determined availing himself, for the gratification of his curiosity, by directly setting out with it for Cornwall.

Arrived at Launceston, he inquired for lord Sebergham at the Abbey, where, from some previous intimation, he conceived it not unlikely he should find him. The porter who answered the inquiry informed him he had just left it for the Castle; and hither he accordingly repaired on foot, panting with heat, impatience, and anxiety, and, as above described, encountered lady Emmeline.

"Just gone!" he cried, repeating her words; "well, to be sure, there must be some ill wind blowing in this quarter; for here I have again missed him by a minute, after having just done so at the Abbey."

"He probably will soon be back again," said lady Emmeline; "to avoid, therefore,

therefore, the chance of another disappointment, you had better repair to the Castle, and quietly there await his coming."

"Truly, lady, since I have your permission, I will e'en do so," he said; "for by this time I am pretty well fatigued; and, besides, should not like any longer delay in the delivery of this packet," casting his eye upon the one he held, "hugely suspecting it, as I do, to come from master Edmund, whom, to be sure, I am anxious, and an ungrateful varlet I should be if I was not, to hear some tidings about."

Emmeline started—"What Edmund?—Whom do you mean?" she demanded, in a voice trembling with emotion.

"Whom?" repeated Hugh, with a significant smile, or rather grin, for a gentle relaxation of the features was by no means what he was accustomed to; then suddenly checking himself, lest of incurring her displeasure, he proceeded to answer her question, giving her, in addition, such particulars as left her no room to doubt the Ed-

mund of lord Sebergham, and the Edmund she had known, being the same; but surprise was not the only emotion attendant on the discovery. For the silence of Edmund, relative to the connexion subsisting between them, she could naturally account; but for lord Sebergham's guarded one on the subject, no otherwise than by imputing it to a consciousness of treachery. The idea gave rise to others of a still more agitating, more agonizing nature. The dreadful state of agitation he had recently been in; the wildness of his manner; the evident struggles he was undergoing, so strongly resembling those of terror and remorse; above all, the anxiety he had manifested for the immediate interment of the murdered body—all, all, as with the rapidity of lightning they darted athwart her mind, excited a horrible misgiving—a suspicion that gave to her cheek the hue of death, and robbed her of the power of supporting herself.

"Oh, the saints! she is dying!" exclaimed

claimed the affrighted Hugh, as he saw her sinking at the foot of a tree. Catching her hand as he spoke, but quickly resigning it, from its cold and clammy feel—"She is dying, and a pretty scrape I have brought myself into; I shall surely be strung up, under a suspicion of laying violent hands, in some way or other, on her. This comes of my curiosity, and of my wanting to know more than folks chose to tell me. Oh that the prince of darkness, who gave it, had it again! or had bestowed it, as a portion, on some fat abbot, who, without risk to himself, might have ran about in quest of secrets!"

As wildly he clapped his hands, he suddenly espied a little spring bubbling up amidst a kind of natural enclosure of white-bleached stones; he directly dipped his hands in it, and threw as much as they were able to retain in the face of lady Emmeline.

The suddenness of the application had the desired effect. Raising her languid

head against the tree—" I am better," she said, in a faint voice; " let me not, therefore, my good friend, be a means of detaining you from repairing to the Castle, for you seem to need both rest and refreshment; but remember, say nothing there of this indisposition."

With a low bow, Hugh assured her she might rely on his silence; and then hurried off, dreading every moment, from her changing colour, to see her relapse, and fearful of the consequences that might result to himself, if surprised with her in the dying state in which she had just been.

For some minutes after his departure, she remained motionless; then suddenly starting from her recumbent attitude, she wrung her hands in agony.

" Oh, save me, my God!" she cried, " from the distraction that threatens my brain at the horrible idea that has taken possession of it!"

Again she paused; might she not be mistaken?—was it not cruel to let mere appearances

pearances induce her to yield to so terrible a one? Did not justice—did not common humanity demand her better ascertaining the justice of the suspicion, ere she so unresistingly gave way to it?—Oh, yes! but how was this to be done? There was but one way—one way of terminating the horrors of distrust—the sight of the body.

It was not too late to obtain this; but if she much longer delayed where she was, it probably would, from the promptness of lord Sebergham.

Impelled by this fear, she straightway hurried from the spot; a door, in a dark closet communicating with it, gave her secret admission to the chamber she wished to gain. She entered it trembling, lest of beholding any one there; but owing to the imperative command of lord Sebergham, she found it empty.

The body was laid on an oak table, a napkin over the face, in order to prevent

the shock which the abrupt sight of the features, contracted by death, could not have failed of occasioning.

Emmeline shuddered; the figure resembled Edmund's; a sudden dimness came over her sight, and for an instant she was obliged to support herself by catching at the back of a chair; then approaching the table with something like a feeling of desperation, she was on the point of extending her hand for the purpose of raising the covering, that, by its removal, was to confirm or remove her horrible misgivings, when, in the very act of doing so, she felt herself suddenly whirled from the table, and lifting her eyes, beheld herself in the arms of lord Sebergham.

Scarcely had he explained at the Abbey what he wished to have done relative to the unfortunate Edmund, ere suddenly recollecting the letter in his bosom, and which, in preparing the body for interment, could not fail, he was aware, of being discover-

ed,

ed, he resolved on returning directly to the Castle, for the purpose of possessing himself of it.

Procuring the key from the seneschal, he softly admitted himself into the chamber, and thus surprised Emmeline in the manner above related.

"What do you here?" he demanded, in a tone almost calculated to terrify. "I should have thought," searchingly regarding her, "that a sight of horror, such as here meets the view, would have been shunned rather than sought by you?"

Emmeline was unable to reply; what could she say? what motive assign for the visit? and yet what might be the dreadfully-injurious inference drawn from her silence?

Confused, agitated, alarmed, beyond language to express, she remained with her eyes fixed on the ground.

"You answer not," said the equally-agitated and alarmed Sebergham. "What interest, beyond that of common humanity, could

could the lady Emmeline feel in the fate of a common stranger! Still silent? Have I not a just right to know?" with increasing vehemence. "Should you have a mystery—a secret from him to whom your hand is plighted? I must—I will be informed of the motive that brought you hither; my repose—my happiness, depends upon the communication."

"This violence is unbecoming," said the trembling Emmeline; "I cannot—I will not be detained in this manner."

"Hope not to be released till you have informed me," exclaimed he, in a tone that made her shudder, and with a corresponding look.

"Hark! I hear approaching steps," cried Emmeline, with sudden joyfulness, and making another and still more strenuous effort to free herself.

"Yes—the feet of those who are coming to remove the body," he said, in a voice that seemed as if issuing from a sepulchre.

Wrought

Wrought almost to desperation at this intimation, Emmeline again strove to burst from his grasp; but again found her effort for the purpose ineffectual. "Release me—release me," in agony she almost shrieked—agony at the idea that in another moment it would be beyond her power to ascertain what it was so essential to the peace of her future days to know. "I have a reason—a motive—" she stopt, panting, overcome by eagerness and agitation; and the next instant, the door slowly unclosing, a monk from Launceston, followed by some men with a winding-sheet for the body, entered.

"Delay not its removal," said Seberg-ham, glancing at his victim.

Emmeline stampt in agony; she would have countermanded this order; but suddenly straining her in his arms, he stifled her voice in his bosom, and thus prevented all opposition to it.

She could no longer cope with her feelings; as she heard the body borne away, her

her senses receded. On recovering from the deathlike trance into which she had sunk, she found herself on a chair, supported by lord Sebergham. Kneeling before her, the moment he saw she was in a condition to notice him—" Oh forgive—forgive," in accents the most submissive he exclaimed, and with a countenance equally deprecating—a countenance again replete with softness the most insidious—" Oh forgive the violence to which consideration for your feelings impelled me; but, aware of the dreadful shock they must have sustained from the contemplation of the mournful spectacle you came to view, I could not forbear opposing you."

Emmeline looked earnestly at him for a moment, then clasping her hands, and uplifting her eyes, " Oh Thou," she cried, her bosom heaving with convulsive sobs, and tears in torrents gushing from her, " Thou only, who knowest the secrets of the heart, who can alone truly distinguish between truth and falsehood, do thou direct me what to think !"

Again the colour varied on the cheek of lord Sebergham, and again his heart felt a shock that affected every nerve; but quickly recollecting himself, clearly perceiving that without an immediate appearance of composure on his part, there was a probability of the suspicion, which, with alarm, he saw she had conceived, being strengthened, he forced himself to assume one of the kind, aided in the effort by the consideration that from the promptitude of the measures he had pursued, there was now no means of her ascertaining any thing to his injury.

"If the lady Emmeline thinks aught to my prejudice, surely, surely she should have generosity to avow it," with calmness he said; "since, to condemn, without affording an opportunity for vindication, is ever to be liable to the committal of injustice."

Emmeline started, and again looked stedfastly at him; his altered look and manner astonished her. Could it be that

he merited the suspicion that had pervaded her mind, and yet so suddenly wear such an appearance of composure? No—it could not be—it was not possible; yet if not, whence his recent violence—the confusion he had betrayed? but had he not accounted—even plausibly accounted, for all this? True; but still to have had the satisfaction he prevented her obtaining, would have been more effectual, she felt, than any argument for the restoration of her peace.

Undecided what to think, now led to believe she had cruelly wronged lord Sebergham, now relapsing into doubt, the increasing distraction of her mind rendered her unable to attend to him, till compelled to do so by the keenness of his reproaches.

Act as he might, yet suddenly persuading himself that she could not positively accuse him of any thing, he again began to be irritated at her conduct, from the coldness it argued.

Startled by his renewed vehemence, lady

lady Emmeline saw she must quickly come to a decision with regard to him.

Her feelings prompted her to enter into a full explanation of all she had thought; but when she reflected on the consequences that might ensue from such a procedure, the disclosure it would probably occasion to her father, she shrunk from the thought, preferring any risk of her own happiness to letting his be embittered by knowing she had ever acted with dissimulation or levity.

The apologies she forced herself to make lord Sebergham, for the purpose of appeasing the resentment he betrayed, had the effect of inducing him to believe that whatever were her secret sentiments of him, they had occasioned no alteration with regard to her intentions.

But the prospect of yet possessing her no longer elevated him to extacy; the alarming suspicion she had betrayed had excited a kind of gloomy, distrustful sen-

sation, that damped the raptures of anticipation.

Had it been possible, however, for hatred to have been excited by the hints that escaped her, still would he have insisted on the performance of her promise, as the most effectual measure he could take for securing the silence essential to his honour.

But oh, how was he agonized by the degrading light in which the idea of acting in such a manner made him appear!—how to think that all hope of the endearing happiness attendant on the union of confiding hearts was over!

To what untoward, what unfortunate circumstance was owing the fatal intimation which lady Emmeline appeared to have received of his conduct, he could not possibly conjecture; but having received it, nothing, nothing, he was firmly convinced, could have induced her to think of fulfilling her engagement to him, but a dread of the discovery that might result from

from the resentment declining it would occasion.

Clearly he saw that to have betrayed to the knowledge of her father the one she had previously entered into, was amongst the things she most dreaded, and consequently that there was no sacrifice of tranquillity she would not make, for the purpose of preventing it.

To dread, to apprehension, then, he should owe her hand; cold and abhorring she would come to his arms; she, the bride for whose possession he had sacrificed so much—his soul's repose—the ennobling consciousness of integrity. "Oh, miserable!" he groaned internally; "for a bliss that now mocks me as unreal, have I doomed myself to endless remorse, to lasting anguish!"

The violence of his emotions, the fatigue, both of body and mind, he had recently undergone, occasioned an exhaustion that made him gladly return to the Abbey; but the repose he sought, the repose he required,

quired, was denied him. The terrific images that haunted his fancy, the dreadful reflections that agonized his mind, rendered him unable to obtain it.

Continually was he starting from his pillow, damped alike by the dew of terror and the tears of anguish, under the idea of seeing the pale, accusing spirit of Edmund flitting past him — the idea of hearing again his expiring groan.

At times he tried to fancy himself writhing under the influence of a dreadful dream; but oh! too many were the circumstances of horror impressed upon his mind, to allow him for an instant to yield to so consolatory a belief. No, he stood, self-confessed, a murderer, the shedder of the blood of innocence—of the adopted son of his father—of the fond and gentle friend of his earlier years; and the world, he felt, could make him no recompence for what he had entailed upon himself by the deed.

"Oh that it could be recalled!" he cried

cried a thousand times, as in agony, impelling almost to madness, he paced the chamber. "Oh that I could throw off this dreadful consciousness that with leaden weight presses on my heart! but impossible; for ever must it weigh upon it, dooming it to coldness, distrust, and wretchedness. Ah, how different would have been my feelings now—how joyous—how animating, had I adhered to my resolves, when first inclined to deviate from rectitude!"

Again what had occurred in his first journey to Cornwall recurred to his recollection; he wept, he shuddered. No longer, from what had happened, could he consider it as the vision of a disturbed imagination, but as the real warning of a presiding being. "Unavailing warning!" he exclaimed. "Oh, aggravation of misery, to think the spirit of my father was in vain troubled on my account! And am I indeed the destroyer of his loved Edmund?—of him whom so tenderly, so solemnly, he recommended

mended to my care? Like a beauteous flower, untimely nipped by desolating winds, does he lie blighted through my means! And shall I continue to enjoy the chearful influence of that sun, from whose blessed light I have been the means of so soon banishing him?—to walk the surface of the earth, yet know that through me he is mouldering within it? Oh God! will not the thought occasion madness?"

But with returning day came a calmer way of thinking; by acts of piety and benevolence—by the endowment of houses for the devout and the distrest—by stated periods of penance, he hoped and trusted to make atonement for the deed he had committed, and entitle himself again to some experience of happiness.

But the soothing hopes he again suffered himself to yield to were speedily damped by a dread of disappointment. He feared if Emmeline was allowed to ruminate long on the terrible surmises she had given him such agitating reason to believe

she

she entertained, her ultimate decision might yet prove adverse to his wishes.

Under this apprehension, he resolved to take an early opportunity of pressing for their completion, even though the return of the baron should be delayed. There certainly was something of presumption in the resolve, but he fancied he had arguments in store that would excuse and justify it.

But not presently could he seek for this; the dreadful conflicts he had undergone had given a shock to his nerves, a debility to his frame, that rendered him unable to pay the visit he intended at the Castle, the day after the interment of his victim.

The excuse he deemed requisite for not appearing there had the effect of renewing the dreadful incertitude of Emmeline. To be so suddenly, so strangely affected, she could not think of it without feeling revived all the tormenting doubts of the preceding day, doubts that again plunged her in horror; for what but horror could

attend the idea of yet, perhaps, joining her hand to one stained with human blood, that, too, of the object of her still tenderest regard?

Yet notwithstanding, she could not bring herself to solemnly decide against the fulfilment of her engagement to him, so apprehensive was she of the consequences that might result from breaking it.

But with such a misgiving as had seized her mind, there was something so like a connivance in guilt in the idea of adhering to it, as rendered still more distracting her feelings.

What, in consequence of this idea, her sensations were, when in the next interview she found herself compelled not merely to become his, but to become so immediately, may easier be conceived than described; but persuaded it was absolutely essential to his safety to secure her hand, lord Sebergham could not be prevented demanding the ratification of his right to it being no longer delayed.

For

For such a demand, he made the uncertainty of the baron's return, and the doubts of her regard, suggested by the anxiety she had already manifested for the delay of their nuptials, the pretext, plainly intimating that nothing but her acquiescence to his wishes could remove those doubts, or prevent his seeking her father for the purpose of revealing them.

This was a threat that made Emmeline shrink with dismay, convinced that a hint of the kind to the baron could not fail of occasioning interrogations that could not be evaded; and that to know how she had unhappily suffered herself to be tempted to act, must for ever lessen her in his esteem.

The agony imparted by the thought was too great not to render her solicitous to be relieved from it; but not till she had exhausted all the powers of rhetoric, till she had reason to believe lord Sebergham inexorable, did she allow herself to acquiesce in his proposal, the proposal of fear

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and desperation, nor then, till he had solemnly promised never to let her compliance with it be known, nor in any manner enforce his right to her regard till their nuptials were publicly solemnized.

These preliminaries being settled, she agreed to meet him at the close of the ensuing day in the chapel of the Castle, for the purpose of interchanging their vows.

His transports at this concession, this almost unexpected acquiescence in the proposition suggested by apprehension, were too great for description: in these the unhappy Emmeline could but little participate; the task of dissembling was too painful not to induce her to wish for his speedy departure, yet when at length he did retire, trifling was the relief afforded by his absence, so agonizing were the reflections excited by the alternative to which she found herself reduced.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

———" My heart sinks in me,
And every slacken'd fibre drops its hold,
Like nature letting down the springs of life."

As the hour of appointment drew nigh, the agitation of Emmeline increased. Now she paced her apartment with unequal steps—now threw herself, panting and trembling, on a chair, her cheek every moment varying.

At length the dreaded moment came; and though nearly fainting beneath her feelings, she quitted her chamber.

Impatient for her approach, the earl stood eagerly watching for her, at the half-opened door communicating with the interior of the Castle. The instant he beheld her,

he sprung forward, and seizing her hand, raised it to his lips; it trembled in his grasp, but she allowed him to retain it; without his support, indeed, she could scarcely have reached the altar, so violent were her emotions.

A friar from a monastery at some distance had been procured to perform the ceremony, which immediately commenced; but the rapture that such a moment might once have imparted to the heart of Sebergham was now unfelt. The sudden consideration of what Emmeline was likely to suffer from the step she was taking, should she ever discover what had really happened—of the conduct he had been led to pursue for the attainment of her hand—of the motive that had instigated him to seek it thus in secret, operated too powerfully on his mind to render him capable of the slightest sensation of joy at the instant.

The silence and gloom of the hour, the kind of mysterious obscurity in which every object was beginning to be involved, had

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the effect of rendering still more oppressive his feelings, from the kind of indication they seemed to give of his wish for secrecy in the present instance, or rather the fearful motives that made him desirous of it.

But in this state he did not long remain: to be assured she was his, their interests irrevocably blended, and consequently all further apprehension of injury through her means idle, yet remain unmoved, was not possible.

Yielding to the reviving ardour of his feelings, he attempted to clasp her to his bosom at the conclusion of the ceremony, but resisting the effort, and eluding his embrace, she tottered to a small adjoining chamber.

Dismissing the friar, and confidential domestic who had witnessed the ceremony, he hastily followed, and again attempting to fold her in his arms, was again repulsed.

Irritated, alarmed, forgetful of his solemn promise to leave her unmolested till their marriage was publicly celebrated, he was

on the point of indignantly expostulating with her on her conduct, when hastily approaching steps made him suddenly pause, and occasioned her to involuntarily hurry from the apartment to prevent intrusion.

At a little distance from it she encountered one of the pages of the Castle, who, the instant he beheld her, informed her he had been seeking her every where, for the purpose of inquiring whether lord Sebergham was not then with her? "a stranger, on business that admitted not of delay," he said, "having been directed thither from the Abbey after him."

Emmeline, for a moment, hesitated to reply in the affirmative, lest the evident secrecy of his present visit should occasion unpleasant conjectures. Unwilling, however, to utter a falsehood, or disappoint the person who so anxiously sought him, she was then led to do so; and having pointed to the apartment where he was to be found, turned into another.

But

But scarcely had she shut herself within this, in order to give a loose to the feelings that swelled her heart almost to bursting, to indulge, without restraint, the wild anguish that pervaded it, at the idea of what she had done, ere a violent tumult in the adjoining passage caused her to start from the seat on which she had thrown herself, and hastily unbolt the door.

Tremblingly advancing from it, she beheld lord Sebergham struggling to free himself from the grasp of an athletic stranger. Confused, alarmed, involuntarily and falteringly Emmeline demanded the meaning of what she saw? Starting at the sound of her voice, the guilty Sebergham hastily turned, and after surveying her for a moment with a haggard expression of countenance, with a sudden effort of desperation burst from the person who held him, and rushing down the vaulted passage immediately leading to the chapel, disappeared within it.

The stranger followed, but was prevent-

ed continuing the pursuit, by his inability to open the folding doors through which the alarmed Sebergham had effected his escape. Returning to the dreadfully-agitated Emmeline—"I am sorry, lady," he said, "to cause you this alarm; but for any shock your feelings may receive through my means, I trust the misery I may have to congratulate myself on saving you from will be a recompence; but allow me to support you to a seat, for you look faint."

Faint! oh Heaven's! how inadequate would any language have been to express what she felt at the moment! the shuddering horror that gave to her countenance a ghastly hue, at the idea of what he had to tell!

Some minutes elapsed ere she was able to raise herself from the arm, which, in apprehension of her falling, he had eagerly extended for her support; then a little recovering—"Explain yourself, I conjure you!" she cried, as she proceeded with him to the apartment she had just quitted, and

where

where a solitary lamp shed a pale, melancholy light, just sufficient to permit objects to be discerned.

Sir Roland (for it was him), the anxious friend of the unfortunate Edmund, had no hesitation in obeying her; seating himself beside her, he proceeded briefly to relate who he was, and the manner in which that hapless yout hand he had become acquainted.

Having recounted all that had happened in France, and previous to their separation in London, he thus continued—"At length ascertaining that lord Pendennis was at one of his seats in Cornwall, without any immediate intention of returning to the capital, as in the first instance I had been given to understand was the case, anxious to know how far I might depend on him, and to rejoin Edmund, I determined, in consequence, on a journey hither.

"Reaching his residence, I had no difficulty, on announcing my name, in obtaining admission to him, and met with a

reception that fully justified every expectation the remembrance of his former friendship had excited.

"But alas! how transient was the happiness this inspired, when, on proceeding to the place where I expected either to have met with Edmund, or heard some satisfactory tidings of him, I was disappointed of both!

"At first, the people of the cottage denied that he had ever been their inmate; but on my persisting in asserting a contrary conviction, they at last acknowledged, but with evident reluctance, that he had been there for a few days, but positively affirmed they knew nothing of him from the time of his quitting them.

"The alarm excited by their manner led to other inquiries amongst the neighbouring cottages, the result of which was increased agitation, in consequence of learning, that about the time he was said to have left them, an unknown youth was found murdered in this domain!

"Trembling

"Trembling with presageful fears, I received a direction to the spot, and closely examining about it, discovered a dagger, crusted over with blood, beneath a tuft of grass.

"The richness of the hilt announcing it to have belonged to no vulgar person, too strongly confirmed the suspicion that had previously pervaded my mind, not to induce me to determine on seeking lord Sebergham immediately.

"Accordingly I lost no time in bending my steps to the Abbey of Launceston, where I succeeded in learning he had, for the present, taken up his abode.

"Reaching it, I was disappointed of seeing him directly, but informed I should probably find him here, and hither, therefore, straightway hastened; but was again led to believe I should not obtain an immediate interview, from not being able to ascertain at once whether or not he was really here.

"At length informed he was, I was conducted

ducted to him. The attendant who shewed the way retiring on pointing out the apartment where he was, there was nothing to restrain my feelings. Unable, from the emotions I experienced at seeing him, to maintain any mastery over myself, I darted to him, and producing the dagger, demanded, as I seized his arm, whether he knew it?

"He started as it gleamed in his sight, and struggled to free himself from my grasp; but forcibly retaining it, I vowed never to lose sight of him till I had consigned him to the punishment he merited. He has, notwithstanding, however, contrived to escape, but it is only for a time; the vengeance I thirst for will render me too indefatigable to permit him to do so effectually; his flight is a proof of his guilt that places it beyond a doubt, and consequently will not permit me to have any hesitation in openly accusing him."

Emmeline wrung her hands despairingly —"Oh God! my God! what will become of me!" she exclaimed in tones of agony;

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her head sunk back, and, for a few minutes, life appeared to have forsaken her frame.

Reviving, she found sir Roland busied in chafing her temples. Raising her languid eyes to his—"Murdered!—murdered!" she faintly cried, as if she had still been listening to him, "oh, merciful powers! and by lord Sebergham!"

"That you should feel horror at the thought, I marvel not," said sir Roland—"horror at the idea of your narrow escape from an union with a wretch guilty of murder, whom it were almost impious to doubt an ignominious fate awaiting, and whose alliance of course must have entailed lasting shame and wretchedness upon you."

Emmeline groaned, and again wrung her hands; with difficulty could she prevent herself shrieking aloud—with difficulty giving utterance to the wild anguish, the terrible despair of her soul.

Earnestly, wistfully, she looked at sir Roland; for a moment she meditated revealing to him the dreadful predicament

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in which she had placed herself, and at his feet imploring mercy.

But her very soul shrunk from the thought; and could she bring herself to make the dreaded confession, was there any great probability of its proving of avail?—oh no; she could not flatter herself there was—could not be induced to believe that consideration for her feelings would lead sir Roland to forego his just resentment for the murder of his adopted son.

But though she could not force herself to make an effort for dissuading him from his pursuit of the guilty Sebergham, not calmly could she think of the consequences that might result from it.

The wildness of her looks, the varying hue of her cheek, alarmed sir Roland in a manner that made him exert himself to sooth her; but the arguments he had recourse to for the purpose were of a nature rather to heighten than allay her emotions; and at length overpowered by the agony they inflicted, she again fainted away.

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He now called for assistance, and only waited to depart till he saw her recover, convinced she was in a state that would not admit of a further conference then; and anxious, besides, to lose no further time in taking measures for the apprehension of lord Sebergham, lest a longer delay should enable him to elude his vengeance.

From the wild fears it was calculated to suggest, Emmeline would probably have made an effort to oppose his departure, but for a dread of exciting suspicions by doing so. The more she reflected on the light in which he regarded lord Sebergham, the more did she shrink from the idea of letting him suppose she was interested in his fate.

Unable to endure observation, to control her agonizing feelings, she repaired to her chamber the moment he was gone; and shutting herself in, with a command to her wondering attendants not to approach till summoned, threw herself on her knees, to supplicate Heaven's forgiveness

for

for the crimes, the misery, she could not avoid accusing herself of having, in some degree, been the occasion of. "But oh! can I ever forgive myself!" in agony she cried, "ever forgive myself the reflection of having practised dissimulation and deception—of having suffered an unwarrantable pride to seduce me from the path of integrity and truth!—Edmund, dear unfortunate! how art thou already avenged for my perfidy to thee! shrinking from thy alliance because I thought it might doom me to obscurity, I have wedded myself to disgrace. Ah! what would be my extasy to have the power of exchanging the one for the other, and thus avoiding the humiliation that now threatens me! Yet oh! for the sake of him who gave me being, may I escape it! on his account I must pray—I must hope, that thy cruel destroyer may succeed in eluding earthly vengeance."

But though he should, though the punishment he merited might be averted from him, still she felt that the reflection

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of being connected with a being deserving of it must doom her to lasting wretchedness.

The constant terror too in which she should be in of this fatal connexion being disclosed, and thus all she had wished concealed, all she had sacrificed, her peace, her every hope of happiness, for the purpose of keeping from the knowledge of her father, revealed to him, could not fail, she was aware, of keeping her in a state of misery.

Whichever way she looked, she beheld nothing but images of horror; her brain almost turned at the contemplation; and but for her widowed parent, she would have been almost tempted to supplicate a quick release from the anguish she endured.

Starting at every sound, trembling with apprehension of every moment hearing the tidings she dreaded, the night was passed in dismay and watchfulness.

Fainting with languor, she quitted her chamber in the morning, as soon as the unbarring

barring of the Castle gates permitted her to go abroad; but she was too heavily oppressed to allow the balmy air to have a reviving effect upon her. The song of the soaring lark, the cheerful sounds that mark the rise of day, and which were wont to communicate such joyous sensations to her heart, were now unheeded. Pale and disconsolate, she moved almost mechanically along, till coming to a sequestered spot, she threw herself on the turf, and in tears, wrung from her by agony, gave way to her feelings.

Suddenly an approaching step made her look up, and she beheld the friar who had performed the marriage ceremony the preceding evening, coming towards her. Starting from the ground, she would have hastened to meet him, but was prevented by the trepidation she was thrown into at the idea of the motive to which his visit might be owing.

Perceiving her agitation, he quickened his pace, and in a soothing voice, on reach-

ing

ing her, desired her to compose herself, for all might yet be well. "That your sufferings should be what your haggard cheek proclaims them, I cannot wonder, my daughter," he cried; "but when I inform you that he for whom your fears must have been so greatly excited is out of the reach of danger, I trust they will be alleviated. The earl," in a lower tone he added, "overtook me in my way back to my monastery; he confessed all to me; and through my assistance, with the confidential attendant who witnessed your marriage, was enabled to effect his escape to France: you see, therefore, there is no reason for the wild terror your looks express."

In a transport of grateful joy, Emmeline fell on her knees at this intimation. "Whatever other misery betides me then," she exclaimed, "at least I may indulge a hope of being saved the excruciating one of thinking the indignation of my father likely to be roused through my means."

"Doubtless," returned the monk; "there

"there is now little danger of any ignominious fate befalling the earl, or of course the baron having reason to reproach you for bringing disgrace on him; lord Seberg-ham is not without a sanguine hope of being able, from his representation of the affair to the king, to obtain his forgiveness for it; should he be disappointed, however, he desired me to bid you hold yourself in readiness to join him abroad."

Emmeline shrunk with dismay at this intimation; she had tried to hope, that if destined to continue a wanderer, an exile from his native country, he would not have the cruelty to attempt making her share his fate. Fearful from it that an immediate disclosure of their union was meditated, she grasped the arm of the friar; and still kneeling on the dewy grass at his feet, besought him, in the most energetic manner, not to reveal it for the present.

Assisting her to rise, he mildly assured her he had no such intention, the earl at the moment of parting having informed him,

him, that except prevented returning to his native kingdom, nothing should induce him to violate the promise he had given her, of keeping secret the ceremony that had already taken place.

This was some little consolation to the unhappy Emmeline; but she had undergone too much for her strength; a sudden shivering seized her frame, and but for the support of the friar, she would have been unable to have returned to the Castle.

A burning fever ensued; and from the consternation excited by her danger, it was deemed expedient to dispatch a messenger to the baron, in Gloucestershire, where he then was, at the house of a kinsman.

Sir Ingelram, the name of this kinsman, was the son of a half-brother, and his next heir in default of issue. Early left his own master, passions, naturally turbulent, had, in consequence of his early freedom from control, led him into various excesses, many of a degrading nature, and which so highly disgusted and incensed his uncle, as to induce

duce him to drop all intercourse with him, and which probably would never have been renewed, but for his interference, being requested in a manner that would not permit him to refuse it, relative to a dispute in which he had embroiled himself with a haughty Welch chieftain, whose lands lay contiguous to his in Gloucestershire, and which threatened to lead to fearful consequences, if some amicable adjustment did not speedily take place.

But to the consideration of what he owed his child every other gave way. No sooner had he learnt her danger, than he set out for his Castle, nor suffered himself to pause, even for necessary refreshment, till he had reached it.

Having heard of lord Sebergham's return to its vicinity, he was not a little surprised at finding him absent from it at such a time; but the circumstance was soon accounted for, in a manner that prevented its any longer occasioning him such a sensation.

Scarcely had he alighted, ere sir Roland, anxious

anxious about Emmeline, arrived from lord Pendennis, whither he had returned from the Castle; and being announced to him, an explanation took place, that allowed him no longer to wonder at what had previously appeared strange.

In proportion to the horror and indignation he felt at the atrocity of lord Sebergham, was his thankfulness and joy for the imagined escape of his Emmeline from the misery and disgrace of an alliance with him.

That the narrowness of this should have affected her in the manner he concluded it had, he could not wonder; but if spared to his prayers, time and soothing attentions would, he trusted, gradually enable her to overcome the shock her gentle spirits had sustained.

He united with sir Roland in fervently hoping the guilty fugitive might yet meet with the fate he merited; and deeply lamenting the unhappy one of the unfortunate Edmund. Could any thing have af-

forded him consolation during the dreadful period he was led to entertain fears for the life of Emmeline, it would have been the conviction of her worth, afforded by the universal grief and dismay her danger excited.

At length he beheld a prospect of her being restored to him; but her recovery was slow, and long dubious.

As the subsiding of her delirium permitted her again to understand what was passing about her, how deeply was she affected by the grief and solicitude of her father, his half-breathed ejaculations for her recovery!—how deeply to think that the period might yet come, in which, in bitterness of soul, he might be led to deplore Heaven's appearing to have hearkened to him in this instance!

Though she shuddered to pronounce his name, yet so great was her anxiety to learn something of him, from the disclosure she dreaded, should he be discovered, that not long could she refrain from making an inquiry

quiry concerning the guilty Seberghan, and had the consolation of hearing that as yet he had escaped pursuit.

But transient was the ease this information imparted to her harrassed mind, so resolutely bent did sir Roland, who, on her recovery, became an almost constant inmate at the Castle, in consequence of the high esteem and partiality conceived for him by the baron, involuntarily avow himself on avenging the fate of his beloved Edmund.

CHAP. VI.

> ——— "This pomp of horror
> Is fit to feed the frenzy in my soul;
> Here's room for meditation, ev'n to madness,
> Till the mind bursts with thinking."

IMPELLED by melancholy, and the cruel conflicts she was enduring, to shun society and observation, when sufficiently recovered to inhale again abroad the breath of Heaven, the gloomiest and least frequented parts of the domain became the favourite haunts of Emmeline.

The reign of summer was now over, and in the quietude of the forsaken fields, the changing aspect of the woods, the kind of languid stillness that at times seemed to prevail o'er all, there was something that at

once

once soothed her feelings, yet heightened her melancholy.

Lulled into a kind of mournful tranquillity one evening, a transient forgetfulness of the fears that tormented her, and which frequently reduced her to a state of terror that made her start at every sound, and wildly hurry from the Castle, she almost unconsciously strayed beyond her usual limits, nor thought of turning till the deepening gloom of the shades reminded her of the length of time she had been out. Accordingly she was on the poin. of doing so, when chancing to raise her eyes from the ground, on which they had hitherto been dejectedly fixed, she caught, through an opening in the trees, a glimpse of the burial-place of the Lestwithiel family—a ruined pile, once of vast extent, and whose ponderous arches, and moss-clad spires, for many a mile the lonely traveller's guide, still proclaimed what, in its days of pristine magnificence, it had been.

Emmeline gazed intently at it, and for a

moment hesitated; then urged by an impulse she could not bring herself to resist, she began to ascend the grass-grown path that led to it, in many places scarcely passable from the encroaching trees.

The swelling column, tufted with weeds, the Gothic sweep of the noble windows, the peaked roof, half lost in air, and half, by straining her sight, kept in view, excited mingled passions—a sensation of terror and delight.

But yielding to the former, she involuntarily paused on reaching the porch. The solemn gloom of the yews that shadowed it, the loneliness and dread silence of the place, suddenly inspired her with feelings that rendered her unwilling to advance.

These, however, were but momentary; again she felt herself urged forward by a resistless impulse—that kind of gloomy melancholy which makes us voluntarily seek objects of awe and terror. The door, no longer secured by fastenings, gave her ready admission; for even here the sacrilegious

hand

hand of violence had been busy; but as it fell back, after her passing through, with a grating noise on its rusty hinges, that echoing through the vaulted aisles, disturbed the sacred silence of this region of the dead, she could not help again shuddering and pausing for an instant.

Then a little recovering herself, she slowly advanced; and lightly treading over many a grave, marked by sculptured stones, defaced and worn away in many places, found herself at last before the stately monument of the Lestwithiel family, covering the subterraneous chapel where their remains were deposited, and to which an iron door in the front gave admission. The image of Edmund rose to her view at the moment; she sighed, she wept, she called upon his name—"Oh, unhappy!" she cried; "driven from his native land, doomed to witness the downfal of his house—denied, even here, in the last receptacle of his race, a resting-place!—and was I, in some degree, the cause of his cruel fate!

—through me were his sufferings, his sorrows, aggravated!—oh, my God! how lasting will be my remorse at the thought!"

Involuntarily she sunk prostrate before the tomb of his ancestors, apostrophizing his departed spirit, and imploring him, if permitted to review this nether scene, to hearken to her supplications, and forgive the violated vow of which she had to accuse herself.

As she continued to give utterance to the anguish of her heart, in lamentations for his fate, she suddenly imagined she heard a deep-drawn sigh; she started, and with fancy all uproused, glanced eagerly around her; but no living form met her view. Her eye again reverting to the tomb, it fell upon one of the monumental figures she had not before noticed, and which, from the likeness she instantly conceived it bore to him she deplored, directly fixed her regard.

The red glare of the west still resting upon a window near the spot, allowed her

to see it distinctly, and she continued to gaze, till, through the influence of a heated imagination, or the effect produced by the wavering light that played over the surface of the tomb, as the trees, beheld from it, tossed their high branches to and fro, she began to fancy she saw it moving.

Hastily rising from her kneeling posture, she retreated a few paces, her sight still strained upon it, and a creeping horror thrilling through her veins.

The bat flitting by her on its leathern wing at the moment, as through the broken windows it gained admission to the place, the screaming of the solitary birds that lodged upon the rifted battlements, and the drowsy humming of the shard-worn beetle in the woods, did not tend to lessen this sensation.

Involuntarily she made a movement towards the door, but had scarcely done so, when impelled to take another look, she plainly perceived something advancing from the tomb, and the next instant heard

a sound resembling that of marble feet upon the pavement.

Unable any longer to control her feelings, she shrieked and fell; quickly, however, recovering her senses, she beheld, as fearfully she looked up, a pallid visage bending over her; again she uttered an exclamation of terror, and was relapsing into insensibility, when the voice of sir Roland prevented her.

"Blessed saints! is it you," she cried, as she feebly extended her arms to receive his assistance in rising, "that I see here!"

"And you too!" said sir Roland; "yet from what I feel myself, I should not be surprised at meeting you in this place, for there is something soothing to grief in visiting a spot consecrated, in any particular manner, to the memory of the object that excites it."

Emmeline sighed, not without a faint blush passing over her cheek, from the consciousness that pervaded her mind at the moment.

"Tell

"Tell me," she cried, at once agitated and embarrassed, "was it not you I heard this moment?"

"Me! no; at the instant you screamed, I was in another part of the building, the passage leading to the subterraneous one that communicates with the Castle of Lestwithiel."

Emmeline started and crossed herself—"Merciful powers!" she exclaimed, "but it must have been fancy!"

"What, you thought you heard some one, and to the terror occasioned by the circumstance was owing the state I found you in?"

Emmeline answered in the affirmative—"But I must have been mistaken," she added; "for see, see," pointing to the tomb, as anxiously she rested her arm on his shoulder, "it still stands there!"

"What?" demanded sir Roland, in accents indicative of eager curiosity.

Emmeline recollected herself, and blushed—"Oh, nothing," she replied, ashamed

of the weakness she was now tempted to accuse herself of; " 'tis too idle a fancy to reveal; but let us be gone—night is gathering fast round us—and besides, though you may deem me foolishly superstitious for the thought, I cannot help thinking a longer continuance here a kind of violation of the sacred silence of the dead."

" I have no objection to depart," replied sir Roland; " on the contrary, I rather wish to do so; for I, too, have seen here—but—" evidently checking himself, " in a place of the kind, one is sometimes tempted to give way to strange fantasies; yet that the disembodied spirit is sometimes allowed to walk this earth, we have authority to believe."

" And is it a belief you yield to? or rather have you had any reason to induce you to do so?" eagerly demanded Emmeline.

Sir Roland replied not; and involuntarily, from the fearful effect his silence had on her, she grasped his arm, and strained an eye of apprehension through the murky obscurity

obscurity of the distant arches, in shuddering expectation of beholding some object of terror.

At length they found themselves without the walls, but had not advanced above a few yards, when involuntarily looking back, they beheld the door, which they had carefully closed, half opening, and something shadowy appearing at it.

Emmeline shrieked, and forcing away her arm from her companion, on whom she was leaning, darted into another path; sir Roland hastily followed, but could not prevail on her to return, though aware in this direction they should have to encounter greater obstacles than in the other; and gradually led to believe that to some sudden gust of air was owing the opening of the door, and that what they had seen at it was but a gleam of light from an opposite window.

After winding down a considerable descent through the trees, the solemn sound of falling waters met their ear, and present-

ly after they beheld a beautiful lake, fed by the cascade they heard, spreading its limpid bosom to the sky.

The banks rose wild and precipitous on every side, hung with streaming shrubs, and hollowed in many places into deep cavities, "moss lined, and overhead with flowering umbrage shaded."

Emmeline could not view the scene without admiration, and which the beams of a rising moon distinctly revealed; yet in the deep gloom and profound stillness of the adjacent woods, was there something too awful not rather to renew than dissipate her recent sensations.

Sir Roland, not less charmed with it, involuntarily paused; as he stood at the edge of the water, a shadow moving on its surface, at no great distance, caused him and his companion to direct their eyes to the spot, and they beheld a human figure apparently sinking within it from their gaze.

Emmeline crossed herself, and hurried from the spot; sir Roland followed; in extreme

treme agitation he caught the arm of Emmeline—" You saw it too!" he cried; " oh! the same was the figure that flitted past me in the ruin—the pallid features are those of Edmund, and no longer can I doubt its being his spirit I have seen, appearing to remind me of his unrevenged fate, or rather indirectly reproach me for allowing it to remain so long unatoned for; but by the blessed saints I swear, no longer will I suffer vengeance to slumber! to-morrow, in person, will I renew the inquiries which the spells of hospitality have too long occasioned me to remit, nor cease them till I have either succeeded in bringing his base assassin to justice, or ascertaining that he is beyond the reach of any man can inflict!—Never shall I cease accusing myself for having a moment slackened in my pursuit; but in the unexpected kindness of your noble father there was something so soothing to my harrassed spirit—in your converse, too, a gratification so great, feeling, as I saw you did, the fate of my Edmund, that I knew not

how

how to tear myself from the enjoyment of either."

Emmeline shuddered, and in convulsive emotion sunk at his feet; she grasped his arm, she looked up in his face—she would have spoken, but her lips refused giving utterance to the dreadful truth.

To acknowledge herself the wife of him he had branded with the name of assassin, and from her broken faith unworthy of the love of him he lamented—unworthy of the regard in which, as an object imagined deservedly dear to him, he held her, was more than she could force herself to do.

Mistaking the cause of her emotion, sir Roland gently raised her—"That you should feel horror-struck," he cried, in accents indicative of the greatest tenderness, "whenever the perfidious Sebergham is brought to your recollection, I cannot wonder, so great must have been your misery, had not a timely discovery of his baseness taken place—even I myself shudder at the thought of your narrow escape from him,

him, so mortal a stab to the happiness of your father am I convinced your union with him must have given, from the guilt he has incurred."

Emmeline claspt her hands despairingly —"Oh! in mercy," she wildly supplicated, "dwell not on the subject! to think that my father may—might, I mean," she added, with quickness recollecting herself, "have incurred misery through my means, is more than I can with calmness endure."

That this should be the case, sir Roland could not wonder, consequently he experienced no surprise at the agitation she betrayed.

Within sight of the Castle, Emmeline again paused for an instant, to desire, in addition to what she had previously requested, that he might not mention to the baron where he had met her that evening, being unwilling to let him imagine her such a prey to melancholy, as must be the case should he learn; neither, for the present,

sent, any thing on the subject of their recent alarm.

Sir Roland readily promised what she required; and entering the hall, they found the baron pensively musing over a book. He laid it aside at their entrance, not without some little surprise at seeing them together, having imagined his daughter in her chamber.

In this belief she would have allowed him to remain, by retiring to it the moment she re-entered the Castle, but for a kind of feeling that made her shrink with something of dismay from the idea of being alone, the superstitious dread that the incident of the evening had awakened.

Making a slight indisposition the pretext for having quitted it, no further surprise was expressed at her appearance with sir Roland; but the conversation that ensued was not of a nature to relieve her spirits, or dissipate the awful impression made upon her mind by recent circumstances.

The

The year was now sufficiently declined to often render, at the close of day, the warmth of the blazing hearth again grateful. "Fast approaches the season of social comfort," cried the baron, as he motioned his companions to draw nearer to the fire, by which they saw him seated; "but alas! to witness a change that renders cheerless to me the idea of its pleasures!"

He sighed, and a tear fell to the memory of her he had lost; an answering sigh escaped the bosom of Emmeline, and, like him, her eyes overflowed. Alas! she reflected that the change he alluded to was not the only one that had taken place in the domestic happiness of the Castle, that the hopes he still doubtlessly imagined she cherished of felicity were for ever lost, that ere long he might indeed be doomed to solitude and despair, by having her torn from his widowed arms.

Sir Roland looked tenderly at each—"Ah! my friends," he cried, in a tone of sympathy, "who can hope or expect that the revolving

revolving seasons will still find them in possession of uninterrupted happiness, of all that was once granted to their wishes. Every thing in life is destined to change, and have its period—no more to seek it; wave follows wave, from their native source to the devouring main. The green foliage that gives such beauty to our bowers, ere long strews the lap of earth with withered leaves; and even time, that in its progress, like a rapid stream, still bears away from us what we most loved and prized, but presses onward to be lost in eternity."

"To the general doom 'tis our duty then and wisdom to submit, more especially when for what we have lost, something remains to console us. In the tenderness, the virtues of her who has been spared you," particularly addressing the baron, "what a source of consolation must you find for her whom it has been the will of Heaven to recall from you!"

"Gratefully I acknowledge the truth of the remark," replied the baron, with a devout

vout inclination of his head; "but there is a species of mournful regret not inconsistent with resignation, and such I must ever cherish for her I have lost; but my child," observing the falling tears of Emmeline, "how is it that I have touched on this distressing theme? yet, in paying a tribute of grief to the memory of those we have loved, is there something soothing to the heart. Oh, my Emmeline!" fondly clasping her to his bosom, "in thy felicity can I now alone find any! all I now desire of Heaven is, to allow me to see thee happily settled ere I depart hence."

Emmeline shook with emotion. "Alas! unhappy parent," she sighed to herself, as almost convulsively she grasped his hand in hers, "never, never can that fond wish be now accomplished!" She started up; her agony was too great for passive endurance; and rather than betray it, she preferred encountering the solitude she had just shrunk from.

Shut up in her chamber, in prayer her troubled

troubled spirit sought to regain composure; but her agitation was too great to allow of its being speedily subdued; and the superstitious dread that began again to prevail over her, as her thoughts involuntarily reverted to her visit to the ruin, was not by any means calculated to lessen it.

Unable to think of repose, yet equally to endure her present reflections, she suddenly bethought her of obtaining the book which the baron had been reading that evening, and which she knew to be an old history of the early Crusades, interspersed with curious anecdotes and legends, well calculated to engage and abstract the attention.

Accordingly, taking up her taper, she quitted her chamber, for the purpose of repairing to the hall where they had been sitting, in quest of it. A profound silence reigned by this time within the Castle; the witching hour was come, and the monotonous vibrations of an old clock in one of the turrets above was the only sound she

heard,

heard, save now and then the hooting of the melancholy bird of night from the battlements.

At length she reached the hall, and readily finding the book, had her curiosity so strongly excited by a passage at which she chanced to open it, as to be induced to draw a chair to a table, and commence reading there.

She had not long been engaged in this manner, when she fancied she heard a movement near her; she started and looked up, but nothing met her view; and after listening with suspended respiration for a few minutes, without hearing a repetition of the sound, she was tempted to imagine it either an imaginary one, or else one of those unaccountable noises that are sometimes heard in old buildings.

Notwithstanding, however, she could not bring herself to resume her book; the remoteness of the hall from the occupied parts of the Castle had occurred to her, and from this cirumstance, she could not

help feeling a sensation of dismay at finding herself there, especially when she reflected that this was the hour in which the awful visitations she could not avoid believing, from what had recently happened, sometimes allowed, were generally supposed to take place, and "the murderer whets his knife."

At either side were ranged coats of mail, and behind one of these, as she rose to retire, she caught a glimpse of an athletic figure stealing.

But great as was her terror at the moment, she had sufficient command over herself to check the scream that was bursting from her lips. To let the villain suspect he was discovered, for such it was impossible to avoid supposing the person she had seen, would be, she felt persuaded, to incur immediate death.

Accordingly she forced herself to loiter yet a little longer in the hall, now, for the purpose of better deceiving, pretending to repeat something to herself, though her lips quivered with fear, now to carelessly

glance

glance round her; but when at length she reached a door leading to another staircase than the one by which she had just descended, she could no longer command herself; darting forward, she hastily secured it, and fled along the passage; but at the end of which she involuntarily paused, there being no other way of gaining her apartment but by passing through the chamber where the murdered Edmund had been laid.

Her very soul revolted from the idea of entering this, but her doing so was unavoidable; and endeavouring, therefore, to collect herself, or rather accusing herself of weakness for shrinking at the thought, she tremblingly unclosed the door. A sudden gust of air, as she did so, obliging her to pause, in order to prevent her lamp being extinguished, her eyes fearfully wandered, and glancing over the table on which the body had been laid, fell upon a pale visage, slowly rising to view above it. She shrieked and fainted. Recovering, she found herself resting on her bed, with

her woman busied about her; she started up, and rubbing her eyes, "Have I not been dreaming?" she wildly demanded.

"The holy saints preserve us! that's more, I am sure, than I can tell," answered Maud; "but if your ladyship wasn't, I can tell who was."

"First tell me," impatiently demanded Emmeline, "how I came here—or you to my assistance?"

"Why, the French knight called me. As I was about telling your ladyship, I had been listening to-night to some curious stories of Godfrey's about giants; and so my head being full of them when I went to bed, I began to dream that there were such terrible monsters again in the world, and that one of them fell in love with me, and upon my refusing to have him, came to storm the Castle; and so strong was the belief upon my mind, that when at last the knocks of sir Roland woke me, I could not help thinking it was him I still heard thundering at the door; and from the fright I

was

was in at the thought, felt unable to move for some time; when at last I summoned courage for the purpose, he told me his errand, and accordingly I hastened hither."

"Strange!" said Emmeline, musing, unable to assign any reason for his coming to the apartment where he had found her.

"Aye, strange indeed!" echoed Maud; "'tis enough to puzzle one to think what he can be doing roaming about the Castle at such an hour by himself."

"I must speak to him directly," said Emmeline, changing, in consequence of hearing he was still up, her first intention of alarming the Castle.

"Oh dear, I hope not, my lady; for the passages leading to his chamber are so dismal at this hour, that I should be quite scared to venture through them, more especially as I know the Castle has been troubled ever since that poor murdered youth was brought to it, and will doubtless continue so, till his death has been avenged."

 "Peace!"

"Peace!" said Emmeline, involuntarily shuddering at the assertion; "I want you not to traverse them by yourself—but hark! is there not a noise in the gallery?"

Maud retreating to the other side of the room, answered in the affirmative.

Emmeline listened for another minute, and then ventured to open the door; but could not help starting back at finding sir Roland close to it.

"I have alarmed you, I fear," he cried; "but I come for the purpose of relieving your apprehensions, by assuring you they are groundless, as, in the morning, when you hear the circumstance to which they were owing, you'll be convinced."

Emmeline was all amazement.—"You know it then?" she cried.

Sir Roland nodded—"Perfectly," he replied; "but I can no more at present—good-night; and rely on it, that whatever now appears mysterious and alarming shall be fully explained on the morrow."

The wonder of Emmeline was too strongly

strongly excited to permit her to be satisfied with this promise; but he was gone in an instant, and the indecorum of following him, to urge an immediate explanation, was too obvious to allow her to attempt it.

But repose was not to be thought of; and had she been inclined to it, the loquacity of Maud, whom the agitated state of her nerves would not permit her to dismiss, would have effectually prevented its enjoyment. At length the broken slumbers of one were renewed, and absolute fatigue weighed down the eyelids of the other, giving her a transient respite from her sorrows.

CHAP. VII.

What may this mean,
That thou, dear corse,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous, and us fools of nature,
So horribly to shake our dispositions,
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?

SHAKESPEARE.

On retiring for the night to his chamber, sir Roland was thrown into no little agitation by finding a folded paper on his table superscribed to him, requiring him to return to the hall as soon as he had ascertained the Castle being at rest, for the purpose of learning something concerning the person he deplored.

All anxiety, he impatiently waited until this

this was done, from a hope that the information he was promised might be a means of furnishing him with a clue to trace the perfidious Sebergham.

But though he could not possibly conjecture who he was to receive it from, he was too thoroughly convinced, by various circumstances, it was not from Emmeline, not to feel as greatly chagrined as surprised on finding her in the hall on his descending to it.

To allow himself to be seen must be to reveal the motive that had brought him thither. Accordingly, to avoid this, he glided behind some armour, inferring from the instructions he had received that he was enjoined to secrecy.

For some minutes he remained uncertain whether or not he had been seen; at length, convinced he had, from the precipitate manner in which Emmeline retreated from the hall, the idea of the terror she must be in, from the partial discovery she had made, occasioned a degree of unea-

siness that presently induced him to decide on following her, for the purpose of allaying it, by the requisite explanation.

Hastening to the door by which she had fled, he readily succeeded in forcing it, the tremor and agitation she was in having prevented her securing it in the manner she imagined.

Proceeding to the chamber that intervened between the other staircase, he found her in a state of insensibility. Destitute of any means of recovering her, he delayed not conveying her to her chamber; and gently laying her on the bed, hurried to call up Maud.

Having procured her the assistance she required, he was again repairing to the hall, when suddenly reflecting on the unpleasant consequences that might ensue from allowing her to remain under the fearful impression made upon her mind, he returned for the purpose of dispelling it.

This done, he no longer delayed keeping his appointment; but, contrary to his expectations,

expectations, no one awaited him in the hall.

Trusting, however, he was not doomed to experience a disappointment, he threw himself on a seat there, anxiously starting at every sound; but night waned apace, without bringing the person he expected.

While a hope, however, remained of seeing them, he could not prevail on himself to retire. At length the grey dawn peeping in at the shutters, rendering dim and ghastly the light of the glimmering taper, occasioning him to despair of this, he was beginning to think of quitting the hall, when accidentally uplifting his eyes, he beheld, nearly opposite to him, a tall figure, leaning in an upright attitude against one of the trophied pillars.

His noiseless approach, the suddenness with which he beheld him, and his fixed and motionless attitude, excited a sensation that made sir Roland start from his seat, and grasp the sword which he had

had the precaution to bring with him—"Speak, who art thou?" he demanded; "if with me thy business, here declare it."

No answer was returned, but gently a hat, that, from its dark bending plumage, completely obscured his countenance, was raised, and the pallid, but ever-interesting one of the lamented Edmund was revealed to view.

"Powers of Heaven, what do I behold!" exclaimed sir Roland, recoiling a few paces; "do my eyes deceive me? or art thou indeed a phantom of the brain?"

A fervent embrace from him he addressed prevented more. No longer able to discredit his senses, to paint his transports were impossible.—"From the grave, as it were, to have thee restored to me, my Edmund!" he cried; "oh, how inadequate is language to express what I feel!"

Mutual composure at length, in some degree, restored, or rather the eager curiosity of sir Roland, for the particulars of what appeared so wonderful, inducing him

to

to moderate his feelings, Edmund proceeded to gratify his anxiety by the relation of these.

Slightly detailing the conversation that had passed between him and the earl—"The alarm inseparable from conscious guilt," he continued, "no doubt was the cause of his not waiting to ascertain whether or no he had struck a mortal blow.

"Recovering from the fainting fit into which I was thrown by loss of blood, I heard the voice of Martin, the son of the peasants with whom I lodged, gaily carolling near me.

"Though almost hopeless of making myself heard, from the extreme weakness I felt, I called to him; faint as were my accents, however, they reached his ear, and brought him instantly to my assistance.

"On the horror he betrayed at the situation he found me in, I shall not dwell; suffice it to say, that having stopped the effusion of blood as well as he was able, he

hastened home, to procure his father's assistance in removing me to the cottage.

"Having succeeded in getting me there, they would have procured me better aid than they could afford, but almost persuaded, from what had happened, to do any thing likely to betray where I was would be to incur destruction, I disclosed to them the necessity I conceived there was for concealment, revealing, for the purpose of rendering them more cautious, the name of my enemy; and declaring myself perfectly satisfied to entrust my cure to Robert, the father, who, I knew, had some little skill in surgery, acquired by his having been a soldier in his youth.

"But though I deemed myself safe with them, the rank of my enemy caused them to be of a different opinion, should any unlucky accident acquaint him with my abode—a dread that suddenly suggested to them the idea of availing themselves of a circumstance that had happened to deceive him.

"Early

"Early on the day of our encounter, they discovered a youth, apparently of my age, and strongly resembling me in other respects, lying dead in a solitary spot near their cottage, with such marks of violence upon him as left no room to doubt his having died by the hand of a ruffian.

"Their first impulse on the discovery was to make it known; but a sudden dread of perhaps involving themselves in trouble by the measure checked this intention, and made them finally decide on silence on the subject.

"The plan suggested by this silence was to dress the body in my habiliments, and lay it where they had discovered me, that thus lord Sebergham might be induced to think, should he return to the spot, that I had fallen a victim to his rage, and consequently prevented from any further persecution till I was again in a state to defend myself.

"Wild as this scheme was, it was carried into effect, and had the desired one; but

but it was by no means my intention to let lord Sebergham remain any longer undeceived than till I was recovered.

"Some time elapsed ere this was the case, owing to the extreme agitation of my mind; but at length I was again able to seek him. He had left Launceston, however, and concluding it was for the capital, I directly prepared for a journey thither; but I was mistaken in imagining I should find him there: he had not returned, nor could his domestics give me any information concerning him.

"From his residence I repaired to the inn where I had left you, and where I doubted not your still being; for mistaking you for lord Sebergham, and consequently dreading to mention your visit, lest, in the weak state I was in, the alarm it might excite should do me an injury, the simple people where I lodged forbore disclosing it; so that until my return to London I remained in ignorance of your journey hither.

"No

"No sooner had I learnt it, than I prepared to return here, aware of the cruel anxiety you were likely to suffer from what you would probably hear on your arrival; but the expedition I wished to use was prevented by the renewed pain of my wound, owing to the exertions I had made ere it was perfectly healed. At length arrived here, I lost no time in setting Martin to make inquiries concerning you, and through them, at last ascertained your being an inmate of the baron's.

"This circumstance prevented my immediately joining you, ignorant as I was of the manner in which lord Sebergham might have represented me, and of course uncertain of the reception I might meet with here.

"Impatient, however, to relieve you from what I was convinced you were suffering on my account, aware as I was, from what I heard, that you must conclude me no more, I would have sent Martin to you, but that I dreaded his disclosing more

than

than I wished at the Castle, namely; the perfidy of lord Sebergham, for whose fame, however great my injuries from him, the love and gratitude I bear the venerated memory of his father must ever render me interested.

"In consequence, I decided on trusting to chance, at least for a while, to bring about the desired meeting. Hearing you were in the habit of wandering about, I also betook myself to doing so, but till this evening did not encounter you; when entering the mouldering walls within which rest the silent remains of my progenitors, I beheld you; instantly I followed, but though I had some reason to imagine I was not quite unseen, deferred revealing myself, owing to my hearing the tread of feet in another direction. Hastening to the spot, a voice, to the sound of which the numbness of death could alone prevent my heart from vibrating, met my ear, and at the same moment, prostrate before the tomb of my ancestors,

tors, I beheld the beauteous form of her I love: my emotions at the sight were not to be controlled. Springing forward to throw myself beside her, I drew a fragment of the decaying marble after me, and through the fright its fall occasioned, she fainted. Your instantly rushing to her aid prevented the assistance I was on the point of rendering; fearful, in such a moment of agitation, of discovering myself, I drew back; but much longer, from the feelings now excited, to delay doing so was beyond my power. Accordingly I immediately sought Martin, for the purpose of dispatching him to the Castle, in order to try and obtain me private access to it; and which, through his relationship to one of the domestics, he found no great difficulty in doing.

"The method I had recourse to for obtaining the desired meeting I need not explain; neither what I felt, when, at the moment I was expecting you, I again beheld the lovely Emmeline.

"Aware

"Aware of what she thought, the consequences likely to accrue from allowing myself to be seen at such an hour were too obvious not to induce me to retreat. To the chamber whither I retired she followed in the course of a little time, though why I know not; and, from what ensued, I am led to conceive had a glimpse of me.

"This is all I have to relate; on what I have suffered from the conduct of lord Sebergham, the dissolution of the tie that I had hoped would have existed for ever between us, it were needless, I am sure, to expatiate; whether it has been the means of dooming me entirely to despair yet remains for me to learn."

Sir Roland perfectly comprehended what he meant, but the happiness he might have felt in relieving him from the apprehensions under which he saw he laboured, of the engagement between Emmeline and lord Sebergham being of a nature not to be dissolved, was prevented by a certain circumstance. To acquaint him, however, with

with what had occurred, in consequence of his supposed murder, was not to be avoided, and rapture of the liveliest nature was imparted to the heart of Edmund by the communication; but the hopes excited by the manner in which he learnt Emmeline received the tidings of lord Sebergham's baseness, were speedily damped by sir Roland's candid avowal of the circumstance above alluded to.

They continued to converse till they heard the domestics again stirring, when owing to the sudden dejection of his mind, unwilling, for the present, to be introduced to the baron, Edmund withdrew, with a promise from sir Roland of speedily following him to the cottage of Robert.

Impatient to do so, he no sooner understood he could speak with the baron, than he hastened to him, on many accounts conceiving it but right to communicate to him the joyful tidings he had to reveal, ere he quitted the Castle.

The astonishment of lord Trecothick at

these could only be surpassed by his pleasure. The interest which the knowledge of his origin, united to the representations of sir Roland, had by this time excited in his mind for Edmund, making him truly rejoice at his preservation.

"But why," he anxiously demanded, as soon as he had a little recovered from his surprise, "why leave the Castle? Surely he might have been convinced I should have had pleasure in having him my guest, and tendering any service in my power to render him."

Sir Roland evasively replied to this interrogation, and shortly after took his leave, for the purpose, he said, of accompanying Edmund to the lord Pendennis's, as in propriety bound, from the promise he had given.

Though the baron still remained a stranger to the sentiments with which Edmund had inspired his daughter, yet was he too sensible of what she had suffered, from the supposition of his death, not to deem

some

some caution necessary in acquainting her of his being still in existence.

But vain was that which he had recourse to, for the purpose of preventing her being too much affected by the disclosure; for a considerable period after receiving it, life appeared to have forsaken her.

She recovered but to experience the most conflicting feelings; joy and grief, terror and delight, alike predominated and agitated her. Edmund was too tenderly, too faithfully loved, not to make her feel extacy at his escape; yet at the very moment her soul exulted at it, she could not avoid reflecting that it probably doomed her to a life of lingering misery; for that lord Sebergham would delay his return to his native kingdom longer than till he had ascertained it might take place without danger, she could not imagine; and indifference by this time heightened to abhorrence, she could not think of the assertion of the claim that this might occasion without horror.

But

But the meeting she dreaded did not take place so immediately as she apprehended; and with the inconsistency of a distracted mind, the very delay she had wished for became a new source of unhappiness, from the cause she was gradually led to ascribe it to—namely, a growing prepossession for another.

The lord Pendennis had several daughters, none of them unamiable; and from the gratitude it was natural to suppose his readiness to serve him must have excited in the breast of Edmund, what more probable, she conceived, than that he should feel inclined to ally himself to his family, more especially, wounded as his pride must be by his knowledge of her having swerved from her engagement. True, she knew from sir Roland that this was imputed to the treachery of lord Sebergham; but still it might have a rankling effect upon his mind, such as readily to induce him to make an effort for shaking off her influence.

The

The more she gave way to conjecture the more probable this appeared to be; she tried to rejoice at it, but in vain. Edmund was too tenderly regarded to allow her to think with composure of the transfer of his affections to another. At length sir Roland was again announced; expecting to see him followed by Edmund, the emotion of Emmeline, who was sitting with the baron at the moment, was so great, on hearing his name, as to induce her to glide from the room as her father rose to receive him.

Sir Roland, however, was not accompanied by Edmund; the looks of the baron too strongly indicated the surprise he felt at the circumstance not to induce him to hasten to account for it. Ere he did so, however, it was necessary to enter into some previous explanation; but he did this in a manner too guarded to permit any suspicion being awakened in the mind of the baron of the encouragement that had been given by his daughter to Edmund—

mund—of the real cause of the animosity of lord Sebergham, to which he had, on her account, been allowed to remain in ignorance. "The impression made by the lovely Emmeline," continued sir Roland, "on the heart of my young friend was indelible, or rather rendered so by the hopes he allowed himself to cherish, with the natural sanguineness of youth, of yet experiencing such a change in his fortunes as would warrant his aspiring to her hand.

"Conceiving, however, on learning her engagement with lord Sebergham, that there was no chance of his ever obtaining this, I had no hesitation in forming one for him with one of the daughters of lord Pendennis, on an union between them being suggested by his lordship as the likeliest measure he could devise for effecting the accomplishment of what we wished, owing to the interest it was natural to suppose the king would conclude he took in the affair, if allied; but no selfish

fish consideration could for a moment induce Edmund to think of acting contrary to the feelings of his heart, or practising the slightest deception. No sooner had I revealed what I had done, than he avowed his determination of directly repairing to lord Pendennis, for the purpose of explaining the utter impossibility of his fulfilling the engagement I had formed for him, and of course fully releasing him from the promise he had made, if only a conditional one.

"I, as you may suppose, accompanied him; to our equal disappointment, however, we found lord Pendennis absent, nor could exactly learn when he was expected back; in consequence, Edmund left an explanatory letter at his mansion, but the result of which we are yet ignorant of, and will probably remain some time longer so, Edmund's extreme anxiety to be in some degree relieved from the torturing suspense he is now enduring, having decided him on no longer

longer delaying to accompany me to London.

"Judging of the feelings of others by his own, and of course unable to imagine that acting with candour and integrity can be attended with any injurious effect to his interests, he still builds upon the promise of lord Pendennis. That he may find his expectations not too sanguine, I believe I need not say is my fervent hope.

"But notwithstanding my impatience to reach London is fully equal to his, I could not think of departing hence without a farewell visit here, so deep is the sense I entertain of the kindness and hospitality I have experienced beneath this roof.

"I urged him to accompany me, but he refused, through motives I think I need not explain, and which I do not now regret his having been influenced by, his absence having allowed me to enter into such particulars as must be a means of preventing his being injured in your good opinion, by the

the circumstance being satisfactorily accounted for, should lord Pendennis think proper to retract the promise made to serve him.

"Should the king, forgetful of former times, reject my suit, Edmund bids a lasting adieu to this country. Distressing in the extreme am I aware it must be to him to do so; but still, notwithstanding this conviction, the advantages I have the power of obtaining him in another, must impel me to urge him, in that case, to the measure."

CHAP. VIII.

"Oh, hadst thou seen her when she lately bless'd me,
What tears, what looks, what languishings she darted!
Love bath'd himself in the distilling balm,
And oh, the subtle god has made his entrance
Quite thro' my heart!"

"True," said the baron, after a thoughtful pause, and who, not without evident emotion, had listened to the short recital of sir Roland, "what he has a right to may still be denied him here; but it does not therefore follow that he should continue unpossessed of what he merits; his birth and virtues give him claims to distinction that cannot always be denied. In short, to be explicit, feelings have been excited by the disappointment he has subjected himself

to

to on my daughter's account, that will not permit me to allow of his becoming an exile from his native country. With her, the object of his faithful regard, he shall share my fortune and affection. In giving her to him, I am persuaded I not only secure, but promote her happiness; many circumstances now recurring to convince me that her consenting to become lord Sebergham's was more from an idea of such an union being agreeable to her parents than any other motive; and that if ever her heart owned a prepossession, it was in favour of him to whom I have destined her: but though, for the purpose of relieving him from all further anxiety, I wish their nuptials to be immediately celebrated, reasons I shall explain will induce me to have them kept secret for some time. A misunderstanding has, for some years, existed between lord Pendennis and me, owing to which, I much fear, from the inveteracy of his spirit, his influence with the king being exerted to thwart the hopes of

Edmund, if apprized of my having any particular motive for being interested in his fate. On this account, therefore, I deem it expedient to keep the projected union concealed, till the king's absolute decision is known."

Sir Roland acquiesced in opinion with him, not without expressing what he felt at his determination—"But for the generosity that has swayed you to it, amply will you be recompensed, by the happiness it will be the means of securing to the being most dear to you," he added; "such is the worth of him I proudly style my adopted son."

Edmund had remained in the vicinity of lord Pendennis, and thither the baron now proposed accompanying sir Roland, anxious to advise with him on different matters; though aware, from the distance, he should not be able to get back to the Castle till the ensuing day.

While his steed was preparing, he repaired to the chamber of Emmeline, for the purpose of acquainting her with what had passed

passed between him and sir Roland, and his intention relative to her and Edmund.

Her consternation at this may easier be conceived than described; almost was she tempted to throw herself at his feet, and confess the truth: but was still deterred by the effect she dreaded it would have on him, from the fond hopes he was now indulging, and the avowed abhorrence in which he held lord Sebergham.

Unsuspicious of it, to feelings very different to the real ones did he impute her changing aspect and averted looks; but scarcely had she seen him depart, ere bitterly she regretted not having summoned courage for the disclosure; so cruel, she reflected, was it to permit expectations to be raised, that, like Edmund's, were destined never to be realized.

Ah! at the idea of what he would suffer, from the disappointment that awaited him, how was her own wretchedness aggravated!

Bewildered and dismayed, she at length

bethought her of taking advantage of the absence of the baron to repair to the friar who had performed the ceremony that bound her to misery, for the purpose of consulting with him how to act, or rather, entreating him to become her mediator with her father.

Though not immediately contiguous to the Castle, his monastery was yet not at such a distance as not to permit her to think she might be able to return from it before night, more especially as the day was not yet far advanced, sir Roland, owing to having left Edmund the preceding one, being enabled to reach the Castle by an early hour.

Her resolution taken, she lost no time in properly equipping herself for her pilgrimage; which having done, she quitted her chamber by a private staircase, without any apprehension of her absence occasioning unpleasant surmises, owing to the habit she had lately been in of taking lonely rambles.

But though lonely, she had never suffered them to extend beyond her father's domain, consequently could not help feeling some little degree of terror when at length she found herself within a solitary wood, at some distance from the boundary of this.

Flattering herself, however, that she had pretty well ascertained the path she was to take, and that in consequence she should soon regain a more open one, she endeavoured to calm her emotion; but all efforts for the purpose proved ineffectual, when, after proceeding a little further, she had reason to believe herself in error.

Hemmed in on every side by shades receding into shade, the bending boughs of immense trees giving a deep shadow to the grass beneath, she knew not what direction to take, whether to advance or retreat.

Whilst in this perplexity, the clouds began to gather, and a sudden shuddering through the trees to give indication of a coming storm.

Alarmed at the thought of being surprised by one here, Emmeline no longer hesitated to proceed; forcing her way through the opposing briars and brambles, she continued to advance, till she found herself in a small glade, on which the time-struck turrets of a deserted fabric met the view, encompassed with a mouldering wall, topt with grass and weeds.

There was something in the complete desolation of the place chilling to the feelings, more especially on its being suddenly recollected, that through superstitious reports, it was one that had long been abandoned to decay. After gazing a minute, Emmeline was involuntarily moving from the spot, when a burst of thunder, accompanied with prelusive drops, reduced her to the necessity of seeking the shelter it was still capable of affording.

Accordingly, passing through the weed-covered court, she tremblingly entered a spacious hall, from whence she had a glimpse of several doorless chambers, involved

volved in an obscurity that was almost terrific to the imagination.

As her eyes fearfully wandered up the shattered staircase, she experienced sensations that rendered her impatient for the lessening of the storm. While anxiously watching for this, she fancied she heard a movement in an adjacent chamber; she started, and would instantly have fled, but for the deluge of rain that was by this time descending, persuaded that any person, brought thither by a motive similar to hers, would not have thought of penetrating beyond the place where she was; and from the ruinous state of the pile, that none could have sought it as a habitation but some wandering vagrant, or wretched outcast.

Compelled to remain yet a little longer within it, she scarcely suffered herself to breathe, lest of being overheard; for a minute she remained in this state, when the sound that had so alarmed her was repeated, accompanied by a deep groan.

No longer able to command herself, she darted from the spot in which she had taken shelter, and despite of the storm, was rushing from the building, when the sudden reflection of the inhumanity she might be guilty of in thus quitting it prevented her.

Whoever was the person from whom the heart-rending groan she had heard proceeded, she had reason to think they were alone, and the idea of letting any one, in the extremity it indicated their being in, remain destitute of help, of suffering a fellow-creature, perhaps, to perish for want of a little exertion on her part, was more than she could support. Accordingly, after another moment of irresolution, endeavouring to collect herself, she proceeded to the chamber whence the sound had issued, and beheld a man stretched upon the broken floor.

Again she started and hesitated; then forcing herself to advance, in tremulous accents she inquired whether she could render him any service?

"Oh!

"Oh! whoever you are," in the voice of a person evidently exhausted by pain, he replied, "for the sake of our blessed lady—" He paused, or rather what he was about adding was prevented by a wild shriek from Emmeline, "Oh, what voice is that!" she almost screamed, beside herself with emotion, from the idea of its being the confidential servant of lord Sebergham, the same who had witnessed the solemnization of her unluckly nuptials, she heard. "Is it not Hubert's?"

Feebly raising himself on his elbow, the dying wretch gazed at her for a moment—"My eyes are dim," he then said, "but as well as they permit me to discern, 'tis the lady Emmeline, the bride of my lord, that now stands before me; oh lady, I cannot divine the chance to which is owing your being here; but to you my steps were bent, when the pangs of death o'ertook me."

"No, no—I hope—I trust not," said Emmeline, involuntarily sinking on her knees

knees beside him. "I will hasten to obtain you aid, only tell me, ere I go, whether your lord——" She paused, unable, from the apprehension that suggested it, to articulate the inquiry.

"My lord!" faintly repeated Hubert; "oh, lady! to tell you of his fate—but Jesu have mercy on my soul!" His arm sunk from under him; and again extended on the floor, he seemed to have ceased to breathe. Emmeline shrieked despairingly. The anxiety excited by the idea he had excited nearly maddened her. She started up, and gazed round the room, as if in hopes of discerning something within it that might be a means of reviving him; as her eyes almost glared round it, they fell on a scrip at a little distance from him; hastily snatching it up, she found, to her inexpressible joy, that it contained a small phial of wine; applying it to his lips, in a few minutes he began to evince symptoms of returning life; but for a little while after rambled in what he said; then coming

completely

completely to himself—"The hand of death is on me," he said; "I must therefore be brief: lady, in this world you'll never more—but, blessed saints, what a pang was that!" He groaned; and his head, which again he had raised, sunk back.

In agony Emmeline bent over him, terrified at the thought of being left in the torturing suspense she was now enduring. Again she tendered him wine, but refusing it, "Human aid is vain," he cried; "my hour is come! Lady, to relieve you from incertitude, know that, as I was about informing you, in this world you'll never more behold your lord. Unable to live without you, we had not been long in France, ere he decided on secretly returning hither, for the purpose of claiming you. Within sight of the coast, a storm overtook us; the vessel was driven upon the rocks, and going to pieces, every soul on board perished but myself. Clinging to a broken mast, I was picked up by some fishermen, and

and received from them all the succour they had the power of bestowing; but the bruises I had got, by being repeatedly dashed against the rocks, rendered useless any thing that could be done for me. Notwithstanding, however, what I was enduring, I determined on making an effort to reach you, unwilling to let another be the bearer of the tidings I had to communicate, lest of some mischance accruing to you from the circumstance. Accordingly, at an early hour this morning, I left the hut where I had been sheltered for the night; but had scarcely reached this place, into which I crawled for the sake of dying under shelter, ere I was seized with pangs that took from me all further power of proceeding, and convinced me I had not many minutes to live. Lady, as you hope for mercy in your last moments, let me have Christian burial, and fail not of having masses said for my soul's repose, and that of my dear lord's. Oh, may all good Christians pray for both! Lady, farewell! long may you live.

live, the pride and joy of your noble father! and in another——"

His ashy lips closed, his features became convulsed, and uttering another groan, he breathed his last.

Emmeline gazed fixedly at him for a minute; a faintness then coming over her, she attempted to rise, for the purpose of moving to a window; but her sight failed, her head swam, and in making the effort, she sunk senseless on the floor.

Recovering, which she had reason to believe was not for a considerable time, she would have been almost tempted to imagine herself in a dream, but for the ghastly sight that met her view on raising her head from the ground. Shuddering she arose, and retreated to a little distance; not, however, without condemning herself for weakness, in being thus affected by the sight of that to which we are all doomed —"Yes," she cried, "in a little while, and she who now shrinks from the contemplation of mortality, will herself be an object

of

of dismay to others." And was she then again free, again at liberty to acquiesce in the wishes of her father? ah! more to yield to her own was the tie she had so deplored dissolved; but could she rejoice at the thought?—oh, no! or rather so agitated was her mind, it was impossible to say what feeling most prodominated in it. Without horror she could not think of the fate of lord Sebergham, of his having, perhaps, died unconfessed, unabsolved, unrepentant!

In terror at the thought, she dropt on her knees, to implore Him, before whose dread tribunal he had been so unexpectedly summoned, to have mercy on him.

Rising, she felt herself again impelled to approach the body of Hubert; he might be in a trance, she considered, such as she herself had just recovered from, and it would be cruel, therefore, to think of departing without ascertaining; she bent over him, but without being able exactly to decide; she took his hand, and its mar-

ble

ble coldness striking a chill to her very heart, convinced her his spirit was for ever fled.

Again shuddering, she hurried from the chamber, nor delayed quitting the building. Had it been necessary to have persevered in her original intention, the rapid approach of night would not now have allowed her, the season being come in which day soon draws to a close. She could not suppress a sensation of terror, as she viewed the gloomy shades through which she had to make her way, rendered still more awful by the impression made upon her mind by the dismal scene she had just quitted, and the low and apparently presageful wailings of the solitary birds that seem to welcome darkness.

At length, through the fogs of an autumnal evening, she beheld the moon rising above the wood; but more than once, as fancied danger made her start and shrink within herself, she almost regretted the partial dispersion of the concealing

darkness

darkness its rays had occasioned. At last she found herself without the wood, and soon after felt herself somewhat reassured, by the cottage lights she beheld in various directions.

She had been too long absent not to make her fear being missed—a fear not groundless; for on reaching the Castle, she found several of the domestics watching at the gates, and was informed they had been seeking for her.

Confused by the surprise and curiosity they betrayed, she hastily passed them, and ordering Maud to follow with lights to her chamber, no sooner was obeyed, than dismissing her, she sat down to address a letter to the friar who had married her, for the purpose of acquainting him with the information she had that day received, and entreating him to attend to the interment of the unfortunate Hubert, and have masses performed for the repose of his soul, and his ill-fated lord's.

As soon as concluded, she summoned

one

one of her pages, and with a special charge to set out with it by dawn of day, gave it into his care.

This incumbent duty performed, she took some slight refreshment, and then again dismissing Maud, retired into her oratory, where, in supplications for him whose conduct had occasioned his untimely death, the principal part of the night was passed.

On quitting it, other thoughts began to obtrude; but she shrunk from admitting them, as inconsistent, in her opinion, with innate delicacy.

But despite of herself, she could not help at moments dwelling on the approaching interview. Still, however, as her heart fluttered with involuntary pleasure at the idea of it, she strove to suppress the emotion; but at last she began to think it was absolutely necessary she should decide on acknowledging or concealing the tie that had bound her to lord Sebergham. At length she decided on the latter, persuaded she could not

not disclose what she had done without being lessened, perhaps irreparably, in the estimation of those whose esteem was dearer to her than life.

But though she finally decided on keeping secret the engagement she had formed with the unfortunate Sebergham, she did not, on that account, mean to excuse herself from paying some tribute of respect to his memory. Till the expiration of a certain period, she resolved not to be induced to give away her hand again; but how weak is the resolve which we form against our inclination! Ere she had risen in the morning, Maud, bursting into the chamber, informed her that the baron and sir Roland were just alighting, accompanied by the handsomest youth she had ever set eyes on—"Dear heart, if 'tis not a pleasure to gaze at him!" she cried; "and to be sure I can't help thinking there is something in the wind, the baron looks so smiling at him; besides, I was dreaming all night of being at a funeral—a sure

sign

sign of soon seeing a wedding. Well, I am sure 'tis time we should have some merry doings again in the Castle, for 'tis long now since we had any."

Though what she told her was what Emmeline might have expected to have heard, yet her emotion at it was as great as if the contrary had been the case. Unwilling to let it be observed, she hastily dismissed her, desiring her to inform the baron, if he inquired for her, that she was preparing to attend him.

In vain, however, she tried to summon courage for the purpose, till a messenger from him importing his waiting breakfast for her, obliged her to make the necessary exertion; but on reaching an anti-room communicating with the apartment where he was, her agitation became again so violent she was compelled to pause—an agitation not lessened by the unexpected sight of Edmund here, who, impatient at her delay, had come to watch for her. On beholding him, she involuntarily shrunk back, but was prevented

vented retreating by his flying to her and seizing her hand. "Oh Heavens!" he exclaimed, in an accent indicative of surprise and reproach; "surely you do not mean to fly me now?" Emmeline spoke not, but made an effort to free her hand; widowed, as it seemed, but yesterday, and calmly now to listen to the addresses of a lover! there was something in the thought too repugnant to every feeling of delicacy to allow her to endure it. Edmund surveyed her with increasing amazement, mingled with dismay—"Have I then," he cried, in a tone of bitterness, after a transient pause, "have I allowed myself to be deceived? have I then been elevated to the pinnacle of hope but to be dashed into the abyss of despair?" He dropt her hand, a deadly paleness overspread his countenance, and staggering back against a pillar, he appeared compelled to lean against it for support. Emmeline became terrified; impulsively she approached him, and laying her hand on his arm—"Oh, if you

you doubt the sincerity of my regard," she cried. More she was prevented saying; the murmur of her voice had reached the ear of the baron, and caused him at this instant hastily to throw open the folding doors between the apartments. For a minute he stood smilingly surveying them, ignorant of what was then passing in the heart of each; then approaching his daughter, he tenderly embraced her, and led her into the adjoining room, with a motion to Edmund to follow.

This he slowly did, agonized by the most tormenting fears, but fears which he determined on having either soon confirmed or removed; for incertitude, on such a subject as that of Emmeline's regard, was not to be endured.

The presence of the attendants precluded any particular conversation during the repast; but it could not prevent the baron from noticing the change that had taken place in the countenance of Edmund—the

look of gloomy despair that had succeeded to the smile of anticipated happiness.

From examining his countenance, his eyes were turned upon his daughter's, as if expecting to discover by it the cause of this alteration. The emotion it betrayed did not tend to lessen the alarm that had previously been excited. He had long been convinced that her affections were secretly engaged, and if not to Edmund, to some being, he feared, utterly unworthy of her. The thought was too torturing not to induce him to decide on coming immediately at the truth; accordingly, no sooner had the domestics retired, than looking earnestly at Edmund—"I did not think," he said, with a forced smile, "that the sunshine which irradiated this morning would so speedily have been overcast."

Edmund replied not, but hastily, as well as involuntarily, drawing back from the table, moved to a window

The baron again turned his eyes upon his

his daughter; her agitation, heightened by the conviction of his having perceived it, was not controllable; and strengthening the apprehensions that had seized him, rendered him unable longer to delay what he intended. Taking her hand, he led her to another apartment, where briefly he explained what he had been led to fear, concluding with a declaration, that nothing but her immediate acquiescence in the engagement he had formed for her, under the idea of its being one that must secure her happiness, could convince him of his having wronged her by it.

Emmeline blushed and trembled; after such a declaration, it was impossible to think of proposing the delay innate delicacy suggested; falteringly she signified her readiness to do as he required, and triumphantly and exultingly he led her back to the parlour; but Edmund was gone. Unable to converse, from the torture he was enduring, or rather to reply to the questions which a kind of participation in his

dismay occasioned from sir Roland, he had fled the room; but not far had he wandered from it; from the windows he was seen, pacing, with disordered steps, an avenue before it. The baron, beckoning sir Roland to follow, hastened to join him. The explanation that ensued quickly restored him to his recent happiness; but again was it damped, or rather again was he made to fear it illusive, when, on entering the apartment where he had been directed to seek Emmeline, he beheld her reclining on her arm with an abstracted air.

He started, and drew back: alarmed by his emotion, or rather the returning suspicion it manifested, Emmeline immediately endeavoured to assume a different air. Encouraged by her smile, he approached and took her hand—"May I," he demanded, with mingled anxiety and tenderness, "may I indeed," as he passionately kissed and pressed it to his throbbing breast "consider this as mine? yet, oh! if to any other influence than that of love be

be owing the gift, ten thousand, thousand times would I rather renounce than receive it."

"Then if such an apprehension could alone occasion its rejection, still will it be retained," cried Emmeline. More was unnecessary to add, more to elevate Edmund to rapture. In extacy he clasped her to the heart that, almost without hope, had persevered in loving her.

Not to sympathize in the feelings of those we love is impossible; again a faint smile played over the features of Emmeline, and again she looked forward to something of happiness.

How pure, at this period, would have been that of the baron's, but for the recollection of her whose bliss would have been so great at witnessing it! but reflecting that in losing her he only experienced what all are liable to, he endeavoured to check all repinings at it.

But not alone by him was she thought of; Emmeline could not think of the de-

 light

light that would have been hers, had it been the will of Heaven to have spared her to this period, without tears of tender regret—tears that evidently proved there is no human felicity without alloy.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

"Some solitary cloister will I chuse,
And there, with holy virgins, live immur'd;
Coarse my attire, and short shall be my sleep,
Broke by the melancholy midnight bell;
There hoard up ev'ry moment of my life,
To lengthen out the payment of my tears."

Unwilling that any long delay should occur in the purposed suit to the king, the baron decided on the speedy solemnization of the intended nuptials, and accordingly fixed on the day after the ensuing one for their celebration.

All was now rapture in the bosom of Edmund; for every past sorrow, the afflictions of his boyhood, the perfidy of his friend, the years of lingering anxiety he had suffer-

 ed,

ed, he now felt compensated; nor could avoid acknowledging, that had his early sufferings been less, his present happiness would not have been so great; so much are circumstances heightened by contrast.

By endeavouring to divert her thoughts from the past, Emmeline tried to participate in the happiness she now witnessed; but, alas! in vain, so continually was something occurring to remind her of what she strove to forget—so continually to recall the ill-fated Sebergham to view. Not a spot, not a scene about the Castle, scarce a place within it, that did not bring him to recollection, rendering unavailing every effort she made for the purpose of regaining tranquillity. Sometimes, as the only effectual method she conceived she could devise for the recovering it, she meditated an unreserved communication to Edmund of the past, but was still withheld by the fearful consideration of the light in which the disclosure might, perhaps, occasion him to regard her—the levity to which he might naturally

naturally impute the yielding of her hand to his rival—the lightness her so speedily consenting to bestow it on him.

Perplexed, distressed, undecided how to act—wishing to unbosom her heart, yet shrinking from the measure, she beheld the hour approaching that was destined for her marriage with a sensation of dread rather than of pleasure; yet was every sentiment of esteem and tenderness heightened for Edmund, with such forgiving generosity did he speak of his perfidious friend—with such eloquence picture what he had suffered on her account—with such grateful warmth dwell on all to whom he owed a kindness.

Oh, what would have been her happiness, her rapture, to have been able to think herself deserving of the affection of a heart so noble! but while the past was present to her recollection, it was impossible for her to entertain a thought of the kind; but might not the future make amends for this? Yes; she felt it might—felt it might gradually enable her to retrieve her self-esteem;

 but

but short-lived was the joy imparted by the idea, when she reflected on what might yet ensue, should accident discover to Edmund what she could not at length help finally deciding on keeping a secret from him.

The paleness of her cheek, and musing manner, failed not at length of attracting the notice of her father, and exciting an uneasy sensation in his mind, something like a suspicion of all not being right; passively, however, he did not yield to it, neither, forcing himself to believe it an unjust one, would he allow a hint of it to escape him.

As a means of reanimating her, of enabling her to shake off the languor that with pain he saw oppressed her, immediately after breakfast the ensuing morning he proposed a ride—a proposal that was too agreeable to the party not to be acceded to.

The day was delightful, one of those mild inviting ones that sometimes occur even in the very depth of winter, when all the

the softness of spring seems to be restored, and the almost cheated senses luxuriate in the change.

Not a vapour floated in the blue vault, while the unclouded sun gave a brightness to the verdure of the swelling turf that was inexpressibly beautiful; and again something of their wonted sounds was heard in the variegated shades—the warbling of the redbreast, the cooing of the stockdove in the pine-tree, and the scolding of the playful squirrel,

> "Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,
> That age or injury had hollow'd deep,
> To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun."

Almost imperceptibly the harrassed mind of Emmeline owned its influence; yet so infinitely more was the languid stillness, the profound tranquillity that prevailed, calculated to sooth rather than alleviate her feelings, that in proportion as her emotions subsided, her melancholy deepened.

The pensive softness it imparted to her looks gave her new charms in the eyes of the enamoured Edmund; he delighted in witnessing a sensibility, without the possession of which, he well knew, tenderness could neither be fully requited or appreciated. Keeping close to her side, he still, from time to time, reverted to the felicity he was experiencing. Emmeline with difficulty forbore sighing when listening to him, so fearful, so distrustful was she of this felicity being destined to be of long continuance. After proceeding some way, they entered the wood where she had been so bewildered, and soon after came in sight of the ruined fabric where such various emotions had been excited in her mind.

The solitariness of its situation, now more striking than before, the forlornness of its aspect, the air of desolation that pervaded every part, impressed her with sensations that caused her to think with renewed terror of the moment in which she had sought shelter within its dreary walls.

As

As her eyes involuntarily wandered over it, her father, who had hitherto continued a little in the rear with sir Roland, rode forward to propose their alighting, for the purpose of partaking of some refreshment there. To this proposal no objection could be made; accordingly, riding up to the gate, they dismounted, and found some of the domestics who had preceded them busied in unpacking baskets they had brought from the Castle.

Edmund having lifted Emmeline from her horse, left her for a minute to give some directions about his own, while the baron and sir Roland stood a little aloof, viewing a shattered turret, rendered a picturesque object by its clothing of ivy. Finding herself unobserved at the moment, Emmeline could not bring herself to resist the impulse that urged her to enter the pile, for the purpose of ascertaining whether her request relative to the unfortunate Hubert had been attended to. Not, however, without a shuddering sensation could she again

again set her foot within it, so strongly at the instant was the melancholy scene she had witnessed there recalled to her mind. Again she almost fancied she heard the dying groans that then wounded her ear—again beheld the ghastly visage that had shocked her sight.

Reaching the chamber where she had discovered him, she paused; and casting a timid glance within it, beheld, to her inexpressible dismay, a heap, resembling a human form, lying on the spot where he had been stretched.

She started; holy Virgin! was it possible—could it be that the friar was so destitute of Christian charity as not to have obeyed her instructions! yet she might be mistaken; what she saw might only be some of the unnecessary garments of the deceased, carelessly flung there; she wished to ascertain, yet wanted courage for the purpose, so terrible was the shock she was aware she must receive from the sight of horror she would have to encounter, should it

it be as she had momentarily been led to apprehend.

While deliberating, wishing, yet dreading to make an effort for relieving herself from incertitude, she suddenly fancied she heard the tread of approaching feet. Terrified at the thought of being surprised where she was, from the confusion she was confident the circumstance would occasion her, she instinctively entered the room, and hastily closing the door it still retained, fled to a staircase she espied through another, leading to a gallery, whenceshe doubted not being able to make her way to the one communicating with the hall; but on reaching the gallery, she again began to hesitate, so dismal was its appearance, or rather so unwilling did she feel to enter the dreary chambers in which it terminated, involved as they were, she saw, by the dusky ray that gained admission to the place, in a still deeper gloom. While deliberating how to act, whether to retreat or advance, she heard on a sudden the rustling

of

of garments behind her, and turning with quickness, beheld a dusky figure coming up the staircase she had just ascended. Faintly shrieking, she involuntarily covered her face with her hands. The next instant something seemed to sweep past her, and immediately after, a low sepulchral voice exclaimed, "Why not alone? Your future peace of mind requires the explanation I have to give; to-night, when the clock strikes twelve, expect me in the bower at Trecothick."

Hastily withdrawing her hands from her eyes—"Merciful powers! who speaks?" demanded Emmeline, as wildly she glanced round her, but without seeing any one; neither did any voice reply to this demand. Beside herself with terror, she directly fled, nor paused till she again found herself in the hall. The wildness with which she rushed into it, her scared and haggard looks, occasioned no little surprise and alarm to those she had left, and who, at the instant, had entered in quest of her.

"Good

"Good Heavens! what has happened?" in a tone indicative of these feelings, exclaimed Edmund, as he hastened to her.

Sinking against his shoulder, "Nothing, nothing," she faintly articulated, "of any consequence; curiosity impelled me to attempt viewing the interior of this place, and its noxious damps——"

Without allowing her to say more, the affrighted Edmund hastily bore her to the door for air; the baron anxiously followed. "The damps!" he musingly repeated; "I should have thought, from your manner, it had been some object of terror you had seen. You were wrong, my child, to attempt a thing of the kind by yourself. Long has this dreary pile been abandoned to decay and desolation, in consequence of the memory of crimes long since committed in it—long has it been reported the haunt of unquiet spirits, a place unsafe for any to pry too narrowly into."

Emmeline shuddered, and with difficulty could suppress the disclosure of the incident

that

that had so terrified her; a fear of its betraying her into more than she wished to reveal alone deterred her; she knew not what to think, whether or no to believe the evidence of her senses, or imagine what she had heard intended for her ear.

Without ascertaining, she felt, from the surmises it had caused, she never more should enjoy peace; and accordingly determined, terrific as was the idea, on being at the bower at the appointed hour, conceiving she should be able to venture to it in a way that would prevent her being surprised, should what had happened prove the contrivance of some one meditating mischief against her.

Full of vague fears, of strange misgivings, to be compelled to converse was painful in the extreme. The necessity, however, there was for making exertions, to conceal the state of mind she was then in, was too obvious not to induce her to do so; greater than she was almost equal to, she was compelled to make this day, owing to

a festive

a festive party being assembled in the Castle; for though the baron persevered in his determination of keeping the intended marriage secret for some time, yet could he not allow an event so interesting to his feelings to take place without some kind of celebration, or distinguishing circumstance. Accordingly the gates were again thrown open to visitors—"again the jocund guest laughed over the sparkling bowl;" and to the harp's enlivening sound, youths and virgins led the dance.

As Emmeline now reluctantly mingled in it, she could not avoid reflecting that the last time she had done so was with lord Sebergham—with him, who, flushed with youth and health, had then looked forward to years of happiness. The dismal thoughts, the mournful images that accompanied the recollection, made her shudder; nor was her emotion lessened by the idea of the disrespect the gaiety she was engaged in compelled her to accuse herself of shewing to his memory. True, he had never possessed

sessed her esteem or love—never been deserving of either; but still she could not think of the tie that had united them without feeling shocked at the thought of so soon seeming to have forgot him.

At length the moment for breaking up arrived; just as the gates were closing, the clock struck eleven, and instantly Emmeline fled to her chamber, to prepare for her visit to the bower. Not without heightened dismay did she persevere in her resolution of repairing to it; but nothing else, she reflected, could remove the torturing incertitude she laboured under, and rather than endure which she felt there was nothing almost she could not brave. Having secured her door, in order to prevent any unpleasant discovery, though, from the lateness of the hour, there was but little danger of this, she unclosed a window, for the purpose of ascertaining the kind of night it was. The moon was up; but drifting clouds continually floating over it, allowed its pale face to be seen but at intervals.

Emmeline,

Emmeline, however, knew not that this was a circumstance to be regretted, unassured as she was that darkness might not befriend her. She listened almost with suspended respiration, but nothing met her ear, save the murmur of the wind through the trees, and the sound of closing doors, and retiring footsteps within the Castle. In this way she continued till nearly the lapse of another hour, when recommending herself to the protection of her guardian saint, and throwing a mantle over her shoulders, she softly unbarred a door leading, by a narrow flight of stairs, to a small hall, opening immediately to the garden. The Castle was seated on an eminence, and the descent to this was laid out in terraces, shaded with high luxuriant trees, whence various walks extended, intermixed with arches of variegated hollies, here and there divided by groves traversed with allies; the whole ending in a thick shrubbery, in the centre of which, where, from the closeness of the shades, the light could scarcely

scarcely penetrate, stood the bower, overrun with ivy, and well adapted, from its solitude and gloom, for meditation, and the indulgence of melancholy. To approach the lonely and sequestered spot it stood in, at such an hour, required no little resolution. More than once the courage of Emmeline nearly failed her; and but for the powerful consideration that urged her forward, the conviction that without ascertaining whether the words which she had heard in the ruin were addressed to her, "she never should know peace again," she probably would not have been able to prevail on herself to proceed.

As the chill breeze murmured, and the high trees rustled in it, she still started and trembled; nor could forbear looking back from time to time at the Castle, as if there was something of safety associated with the very sight of it. At length, reaching the shrubbery, instead of advancing immediately through it, she turned into a circuitous path, that, without allowing her approach

proach to the bower to be seen, would bring her to it. Her heart now began to beat with redoubled quickness, and for a moment after she had reached the termination of the path, she was unable to move; then summoning all her courage to her aid, she cautiously stepped forward, and through the massy foliage of the place, endeavoured to obtain a view of the interior; for a minute, however, this was impossible, owing to a sudden cloud over the moon; dispersing then, the breaking forth again of night's resplendent luminary permitted her to behold a figure resembling the one she had seen in the ruin standing in a musing attitude near the entrance.

With difficulty suppressing an exclamation of terror, she involuntarily recoiled; a glimpse of her receding form, however, had been caught, and ere she could effect her retreat, the mysterious figure had started forward.

"You would fly me then!" he exclaimed; "but I must be heard, for I come—"

"From

"From whom?" faintly demanded the shuddering Emmeline, catching at a tree for support.

"From Sebergham," he replied, in a loud authoritative tone.

"From the dead!" shrieked Emmeline, and fell senseless at his feet.

Recovering, she found herself supported by him; she uplifted her eyes to his face; she doubted their evidence, for suddenly she imagined she beheld in his features those of sir Ingelram, her kinsman. "But no; it cannot be," she wildly cried, starting from his grasp, "and yet——"

"You are not mistaken," he added, finishing the sentence for her, with a smile so peculiar to him—a smile of mingled bitterness and acrimony, as at once to put her out of doubt; "it is your cousin you indeed see; but no wonder you should have thought yourself mistaken, so little, certainly, could you have expected to have seen him here at such an hour, and in this disguise."

"Little indeed," repeated the bewildered

ed Emmeline; "but," faltering as she proceeded, "you mentioned a name—you said that you came——"

"From your husband," he rejoined, with quickness.

"Ah!" exclaimed Emmeline, recoiling a few paces, and involuntarily covering her face with her hands.

"Yes, from lord Sebergham," he added; "of whose imagined fate, I find——"

"Imagined!" shrieked Emmeline; "powers of mercy! what do I hear? Imagined!" she repeated; "but no, it cannot be!" sinking on her knees at his feet, "for I was assured of his death—assured by——"

"No matter by whom," abruptly interrupted sir Ingelram; "be it by saint or devil, they deceived you, for lord Sebergham still lives to claim his beauteous bride."

"Am I to believe you?" demanded the trembling Emmeline; "in pity, in mercy, be explicit, that I may know my fate."

 "Why,

"Why, you must know, that almost by a miracle, his lordship was saved from the wreck; for I take it for granted, that whoever informed you of his death, informed you of the manner in which it was supposed to have been incurred. By a chance not necessary now to explain, I happened to be at the place whither he was brought; we were previously known to each other, and immediately recognising me, he had no hesitation in confiding to me his marriage, and exact situation; and entreating that I might be the bearer of a message to you, requesting a private meeting, for the purpose of consulting you relative to the place you would like to settle in abroad, it not being his intention to disclose your marriage till he has provided a suitable residence for you. What he desired, I readily undertook; but aware of the necessity of an immediate return to him, and that I could not make as short a stay here as circumstances demanded without probably offending the baron, I resolved on coming

 hither

hither in secret. A few miles off, my horse met with an accident, which rendering it impossible for me to pursue the remainder of my journey, except on foot, I was led to address a letter to you, desiring, after first enjoining you to silence relative to it, a meeting with you, as soon as possible after the receipt of it, in the ruin in the wood; but that it never reached your hand, notwithstanding the assurance to that effect of the peasant who undertook delivering it, I am inclined to believe, from the terror and surprise you manifested at beholding me there. I was, however, of a different opinion on first catching a glimpse of you at the place of appointment. The moment my messenger returned, I repaired thither, but had not been long there, when, owing to the solitude and stillness of the place, I fell asleep; a noise suddenly awoke me, and starting up, I beheld you passing through the chamber; I instantly followed, under the firm conviction of being expected by you; but had scarcely reached the

the gallery, where I supposed you awaiting me, ere the sound of feet in another part of the building causing me to dread a surprise, I hastily retreated, without allowing myself time to say more than the necessity there was for this conference."

Mute and motionless did Emmeline, the heart-struck Emmeline, listen to him. Had she obeyed the impulse of her feelings, she would at once, on his concluding, have protested against ever beholding lord Sebergham more; but a dread of provoking him to some act of violence, by refusing the required meeting, to something that might be a means of defeating the plan that had hastily suggested itself to her, for avoiding all further intercourse with him, deterred her.

Yet more terrible than death to her imagination was the idea of the desired conference, of again beholding him who had wooed her to the destruction of her earthly happiness, and who, in his sight, in whose eyes the intention constitutes the crime, must,

must, she shudderingly reflected, be considered as a murderer. Rather, however, than run the risk of provoking his resentment, she forced herself to decide on granting it.

The ensuing night, at the same hour, she promised to meet him in the apartment underneath her chamber—a promise which sir Ingelram had no sooner received than he departed.

Not immediately, however, did Emmeline quit the solitary spot in which he had left her; fixed in agony, she remained for some minutes there, with her eyes despairingly upraised to heaven—"Yet none, oh none," she sighingly exclaimed, "have I to accuse for my misery but myself. Early was I taught that the fruits of rashness and insincerity are suffering and repentance; but the precepts were disregarded, and the punishment of neglected admonition is mine."

But heavy as this was, she trembled to think of the possibility there was of its being still

moresevere; from the little delay, however, lord Sebergham proposed making in the kingdom, she trusted the escape of Edmund would not yet reach him, that he would remain ignorant of it till she had time to carry her projected plan into effect.

Immediately after the promised interview, she determined on retiring into a convent; no seclusion, no solitude, being half so terrible to her imagination as the idea of passing her life with a man whom she could neither esteem nor love—on the contrary, whom she held in terror and abhorrence, from his attempt on the life of him she held so dear.

Amidst her wretchedness, however, she could not help rejoicing that no hint of her intended marriage had transpired, so great an addition to her misery would the shame she was aware she should now have felt from the circumstance been.

Longer than till after the interview with lord Sebergham to conceal her unhappy situation from her fathershe saw to be impossible;

ble; and no small aggravation of the wretchedness it occasioned was the idea of the feelings it was likely to excite in his mind.

But determining, as she did, from consideration for his safety, not to reveal it till the day after the next, how was she bewildered in endeavouring to think of some excuse for postponing her projected marriage, which, as may be recollected, the ensuing one was fixed on for the celebration of!

Illness was the only one she could think of for the purpose, and which, from what she felt, she was convinced would not be deemed a pretended one, should she be seen.

It was her intention, however, to seclude herself in her chamber, stern virtue and propriety, after the discovery that had taken place, interdicting all further intercourse between her and Edmund; but oh! how acute was her agony at the idea of no more beholding him—no more being soothed by his soft endearments, or listening to the

 melting

melting music of his voice! but to atone for the past, to appease the indignation it must excite, to retrieve her injured fame, it was requisite she should for ever fly him, shroud herself within walls which he could not penetrate.

But when he heard of her apparent inconstancy, would he have a wish to intrude on her retirement? No, no; she could not flatter herself he would, could not imagine but that she should be indignantly expelled from his heart as unworthy of a place in it.

To wish the contrary, to wish he might retain a lingering tenderness for her, she felt would be selfish, and yet she could not prevent gushing tears at the idea of being soon forgotten by him—of another, in the new scenes into which he would hurry on receiving the explanation that awaited him, being allowed to supplant her in his affections.

Alas! how soon, she could not avoid reflecting, were her prospects closed, her

doom

doom decided! ere yet her noon was at hand, her sun appeared set for ever.

But not entirely for herself did she weep: could she have imagined that none would have suffered through her means but herself, she would have been able to have met, with some degree of composure, what she deemed a merited infliction; but the idea of the sufferings her sorrows would be the occasion of to others, to her indulgent parent, and probably, for a time, to Edmund, the noble-minded, and long-tried Edmund, deprived her almost of all command over herself.

Not to rest, but to the better digesting of her plans, was the remainder of the night devoted, on returning to her chamber. With mingled sensations she at length saw the dawn approaching, that but the preceding day she had fondly flattered herself would have ushered in her bridal one with Edmund.

She now no longer hesitated penning a few lines to her father, explanatory of the

necessity there was for the intended nuptials being postponed, in consequence of a sudden indisposition she had been seized with, which precluded her even leaving her chamber.

At the usual hour, Maud made her appearance; and having informed her of her being taken ill, Emmeline delivered her billet to the baron to her, with a charge not to delay giving it to him immediately.

Fearful, however, from knowing that Maud was much given to loiter, that this charge might not be attended to, she followed, unperceived, to the head of the stairs, and finding, as she had apprehended, that she had stopped in the hall to enter into a gossip with some of the servants, was about descending a few steps, for the purpose of calling to her, when the unexpected sight of Edmund, issuing from a chamber on the landing-place, made her start back with confusion and dismay.

Flying up the staircase, ere she could regain her own he seized her hand, and notwithstanding

withstanding an involuntary effort she made to disengage it, succeeded in drawing her into an adjoining anti-chamber.

"Why attempted my Emmeline," he asked, in a tone of tender reproach, "to draw back? I would chide her, but that I am persuaded if she knew how impatiently, how anxiously I have been watching for this moment, she would not have done so; yet with what reluctance should I reveal what has rendered me so solicitous for it, but for the confidence I repose in her affection and generosity! Ah! my love, even destitute almost of expectation is the man to whom your hand is promised—that hand which the most illustrious might think themselves exalted by receiving. This morning, ere my eyes were well opened, a letter was delivered me from lord Pendennis, informing me that he had been so fully convinced, by reflection, that the promise he had made to my friend sir Roland was one that could not, with prudence or propriety, be adhered to, that he could

not think of keeping it—a proof that in making it he had alone been swayed by selfish motives. His declining to interfere in the business almost forbids the indulgence of hope relative to the restoration of my birthright; so little chance do I conceive there is, from my knowledge of the disposition of the haughty and implacable Edward, of sir Roland's application in my behalf being attended to without being backed by some one of interest; if, however, you do not regret the thought of allying your fortunes to a man now almost hopeless of ever possessing aught but the unblemished reputation of his ancestors, my apprehended disappointment will not be so great a source of unhappiness as must otherwise be the case."

Emmeline hesitated; what could she say? how give him assurances her actions must immediately contradict? all that she ever felt of distress was slight, compared to what she experienced in this excruciating moment of embarrassment; how did she re-

gret

gret having suffered herself to be tempted by any circumstance to run the risk of again encountering him! how shrink in agony from the thought of what he would shortly be led to think of her! Yes, she could not doubt, that from this conversation having preceded his knowledge of her billet to her father, that the request it contained would be imputed to the disclosure he had made her—to a sudden revolution in her sentiments, owing to the anticipated disappointment of his expectations, and that in consequence she would be considered utterly unworthy of his esteem or tenderness.

"Will you not grant me the happiness of saying you do not repent your promise to me?" he cried, but in a tone, and with a look, that fully intimated his not needing the assurance—a tone, a look of fond security, after waiting a minute in evident expectation of hearing her speak.

"Repent!" she repeated, finding herself thus compelled to reply; "no! Heaven is my witness!" She stopped; recollected herself;

herself; and in agony at being under a necessity of checking the effusions of her heart, wrested her hand from him, and fled to her apartment.

Scarcely had she entered it, ere she regretted having quitted him in such a manner—"Yet what was I to do?" she cried, as despairingly she wrung her hands; "had I longer remained, could I have avoided giving utterance to what my heart dictated, and thus doomed myself, from what is to follow, to a still greater imputation of inconsistency and deceitfulness? Oh! with what truth could I have given the assurance that was required of me! but this will now never be believed; and to my other sorrows will be added that I must experience from the conviction of being deemed unworthy of a place in the recollection of him I must for ever love. Ah! had it been granted me to have compensated to him for the cruelty of fortune, how great would have been my joy and exultation!"

How it was likely he would act upon the

disclosure

disclosure of her billet, or rather, in consequence of the surmises she could not doubt its occasioning, began to occupy her thoughts. From his pride and natural warmth, she was led to imagine he would immediately depart from the Castle.

She could not avoid hoping he might, so much did she dread the idea of encountering him again.

To prevent all risk of this, as well as of being betrayed into the power of lord Sebergham, she persevered in her determination of retiring into a convent immediately after her intended explanation with her father—an explanation that she could not think of without dismay.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

"Think'st thou I'll make a life of jealousy?
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh surmises? No, to be once in doubt,
Is to be resolv'd."

A KIND of vague alarm pervaded the bosom of Edmund at the conduct of Emmeline. Her hesitation, the manner in which she had shunned his looks, above all, her precipitate retreat, excited fears that shook his frame with agitation; yet despite of appearances, could he hardly help believing he wronged her by admitting them, by entertaining even a doubt of her truth or disinterestedness. Ere, however, he availed himself of her promise, he resolved on being fully satisfied that it was one she did not regret—one that love alone had

had actuated her to give; nothing else could satisfy his pride or delicacy; not all the bliss he had pictured to himself from her possession induce him to desire the fulfilment of it, without such an assurance. But how, without running the risk of offending, was this necessary assurance to be obtained, so indicative of injurious doubts must its requiring be? While pondering on the subject, he received a summons to the baron, to whom already he had shewn the letter of lord Pendennis.

Obeying it with something of a presageful feeling, the billet of Emmeline was put into his hand; and as soon as it was supposed he had cast his eyes over it, the baron proceeded to inform him, that he was concerned to say the appearance of his daughter, whom he had been to visit in her chamber, too fully corroborated its statement not to make him think it absolutely expedient that the request it contained should be complied with.

"Certainly," was the answer he received

from

from the pale and quivering lips of Edmund, confirmed in every doubt and injurious misgiving by it; "certainly," he repeated; but with a calmness and composure that completely deceived the baron—the calmness and composure of indignant pride, of disdainful scorn.

"Yes, I had no doubt of your being induced to think so by my representation. Well, I am happy to see you bear the delay of your felicity with so much patience; for doing so, however, I trust you will be rewarded by finding it but a short one; for though the illness of Emmeline is severe, I flatter myself it will be but transient, and then——"

Unable to endure the mention of an event he could no longer entertain a hope of, Edmund now hastily interrupted him, to beg permission to retire, for the purpose, he pretended, of acquainting sir Roland, who had not yet left his chamber, of the postponement, he forced himself to add, of his happiness.

What

What he desired being obtained, he precipitately withdrew; but though the resolution he had formed rendered him impatient to communicate the overthrow of his hopes to his friend, he was not able for some minutes to subdue his emotions sufficiently to collect himself for the purpose. Scarce could he believe the evidence of his senses—scarce that he was not under the influence of some distressing dream, so almost incredible appeared the selfishness he was now led by circumstances to attribute to the unhappy Emmeline; for as she had feared, had imagined, to his disclosure to her he entirely imputed the billet he had been shewn.

When at length he entered the chamber of sir Roland, his wild and haggard countenance startled and surprised him—"Good God!" he eagerly ejaculated, casting aside a book he was reading, "what is the matter? or rather, how can you let what has happened (for with the letter of lord Pendennis

he-

he was acquainted) affect you in such a manner?"

"You err in supposing it has," replied Edmund; "no," in a tone of bitterness he added, "where my faith was small, my disappointment could not be great; it is not strangers, but those whom I loved, on whom my very soul was lavished, that have been destined to make me feel the anguish that is attendant on misplaced confidence. What will you think, what will you say, when I inform you that Emmeline—Emmeline, whose treacherous smiles gave rise to such extatic hopes, has proved herself a mere worshipper of that idol that has to me been so unkind!"

"Explain yourself," cried sir Roland, with evident emotion; "if Emmeline prove false——"

"If," repeated Edmund, with a burst of indignant anguish; "oh that it could admit of a doubt! But you shall hear what I have to reveal, and whether I have unjustly accused

accused her; you will then be better able to decide."

Accordingly he briefly communicated what had happened; sir Roland listened to him with an attention that fully indicated the interest he took in his happiness. When he had concluded—"Appearances certainly are against her," he said; "but where happiness is at stake, one should not entirely be influenced by them. Supposing, however, it to be as you think, that she has wavered in consequence of deeming your expectations at an end, still the promise she has plighted gives you a right to her hand."

"A right!" exclaimed the agitated youth, starting from the chair on which he had thrown himself; "and think you I could have the meanness to assert it—that any consideration could induce me to incur the imputation of being influenced by sordid views, as asserting this right, situated as I now am, would undoubtedly occasion me to do?—

True to his word, he soon returned to say that

oh! if you do, by Heaven you wrong me! No; though existence itself depended on possessing her, I would not; the revolting pride of my nature would not permit me to sue for her hand, or rather compel her to give it. But think not, my friend, my now only friend, I believe," perceiving sir Roland looked hurt, "that any indirect reproach is meant to you by what I have said —no; I am too well aware of your suggestion being owing to a mistaken idea of my passion being insurmountable, and consequently that my happiness depended on the projected union taking place, for me to allow any thing of the kind to escape me."

"No, I did not wrong you," said sir Roland, warmly; "and yet how can I affirm so, when I conceived you not equal to the effort of expelling an unworthy object from your heart?—trust me, I rejoice to find myself mistaken; so great a proof of weakness should I in reality have deemed a contrary conduct."

"Resolutions opposed by the heart are but

but too apt to be subdued," said Edmund. "To avoid, therefore, the risk of mine being shaken, it is my intention to quit this immediately; and when I get to a certain distance from the Castle, addressing an explanatory letter to the baron. Jacques must be ordered to prepare our horses privately, and conduct them to some place where we may reach them unperceived; for I am too well aware of the emotions likely to be excited by a personal explanation with the baron not to earnestly wish to avoid it, which, of course, I can only do by preventing his being apprized of my intention of departing."

Sir Roland acquiescing in the propriety, or rather prudence, of this determination, for since resolved on relinquishing Emmeline, from a belief of her regretting their engagement, he conceived it would be folly to subject himself to arguments that might render his doing so still more painful, Jacques was summoned, and receiving the necessary instructions, promised to be expeditious in obeying them.

that all was ready, and he had succeeded in getting the horses to a private spot, where there was no danger of being discovered.

Sir Roland and Edmund having employed themselves during his absence in preparing for their departure, there was nothing now to delay it. The only way he had ascertained in which they could leave the Castle unobserved was through the chapel, and accordingly he now led the way thither.

Edmund started, and involuntarily shrunk back on entering it, shocked by the sight of a place, that, having been fixed on for the completion of his happiness, reminded him more forcibly than any other of the disappointment he had sustained—"Oh God!" in bitterness of soul he sighed, waving to sir Roland to proceed, who, finding he lingered, had also paused, "how uncertain, how delusive are the hopes of man! But this very morning, and what a thrill of rapture did I experience at the sight of these burnished windows, from the ideas I was indulging! Yet, Heaven is my witness,

I bear

I bear no resentment to her who has so suddenly made me feel the anguish of disappointment. No, Emmeline, here, where I had hoped our vows would have been plighted—here, most fervently I pray, that all the happiness I pictured to myself their interchange would have been productive of may be thine!—that on one less devoted to thee thy hand may never be bestowed!"

He hurried forward through clustered pillars, bedecked with many a banner of her house, gently rustling in the morning breeze as it gained admission to the place through the half-opened door, over the sculptured monuments of those to whom they had once belonged.

The grandeur he here witnessed was of too melancholy a description, too solemn, too impressive, not to heighten his sadness, to render still more overwhelming his feelings. Again involuntarily pausing within a few paces of the door—"Am I then for ever quitting this hospitable roof!" almost

unnerved, he exclaimed; "for ever relinquishing the delightful hopes I so fondly indulged! but there is no other way of avoiding self-degradation than by tearing myself from it. Farewell then, Emmeline," he despairingly cried, as if at the moment she was present to his view; "farewell then," rushing out as he spoke, "for ever!"

He speedily overtook his friend; and soon reaching the place where the horses were stationed, they hastily mounted; and followed by Jacques, set off at full gallop. As soon, however, as they had got to a sufficient distance from the Castle to free them from their apprehension of encountering any one belonging to it, their speed was slackened, for the purpose of allowing the renewal of their conversation.

Edmund, by this time recovered from the emotion that had nearly overcome him at the moment of departing, was able to discourse with calmness on the plans to be pursued; in place of the sudden tide of

softness

softness that had nearly overwhelmed him, a kind of stern indignation pervaded his soul, such as was well calculated to prevent any return of weakness.

They were within a short distance of the place where he purposed alighting, in order to write to lord Trecothick, when a peasant boy suddenly accosted him, for the purpose of delivering a letter from the Castle of Pendennis, and which he produced, as he spoke, from his bosom.

Not without a sensation of surprise did Edmund extend his hand for it—a feeling not lessened when, on casting his eyes over it, he perceived the signature was that of one of lord Pendennis's daughters; eagerly, in consequence, he began to peruse the contents, which were as follow :—

"Nothing, I am well aware, but the motive that occasions it, could excuse the impropriety of this address; but when the

the former is considered, as I cannot avoid persuading myself it will, I am not without hopes that the latter may be overlooked.

"Who I am, the signature will reveal, and that explained, all wonder at my being acquainted with the story of lord Lestwithiel's son will cease. Not to feel for his unmerited deprivations were impossible; prompted, by the regret they have inspired, to wish to serve him, I have bethought myself of a plan for the purpose, the feasibility of which has occasioned this letter, lest otherwise the one I am aware of his having received this morning might lead to some rash resolution at his side.

"With lord Easterling, and his great influence over the king, he is doubtless acquainted, from his long intercourse with those who compose the court. For some time past, this nobleman has thought proper to distinguish me by his attentions, but hitherto without their meeting with

that

that return, which, in the opinion of some, perhaps, they might be deemed deserving of.

"The sudden idea, however, that by conquering my averseness to them I might obtain you a friend, has induced me to attempt a thing of the kind; for what is there I would not—that is—I mean what is there one would not gladly do, to obtain the power of serving a person injured without cause?

"To be explicit, I have sounded his lordship on the subject, giving him to understand that a certain proof of complaisance from him will probably be rewarded with a similar one from me, and have received an assurance that [illegible] warrants my indulging hope, which that in this instance it may not be disappointed is my devout prayer; should it be, in vain shall I have sacrificed——but what am I saying? the hurry and agitation in which I write, lest of a surprise, has caused me to express myself very inadvertently; but though, as you may suppose from this

 dread,

dread, anxious to conclude, I cannot bring myself to do so without first beseeching you not to let this letter be considered in the light of a comment on the conduct of my father. Persons encumbered with the cares of a family often meet with things that make them act contrary to the real feelings of their nature. Should you wish to return any kind of answer to this, you may safely entrust it to the bearer, my foster-brother, and on whose fidelity and discretion the greatest reliance may be placed. Farewell! may the saints have you in their holy keeping! and tell the noble friend that has so warmly interested himself for you, that he is respectfully greeted by

"Isabel Madoc."

Good Heavens! what were the feelings of the susceptible, the enthusiastic Edmund at the perusal of this letter, at the sacrifice it evinced to him a person, whose regard he

he never had had an opportunity of cultivating, was ready to make for him! How were they heightened by the involuntary contrast he drew between the romantic character it gave to his knowledge, and the apparently cold and calculating Emmeline!

To have had the power of immediately prostrating himself at her feet, and there pouring forth the gratitude she had inspired, was the instantaneous wish of his soul. To proceed on his journey without obtaining it was not to be thought of; generosity, as well as gratitude, required he should seek it, in order to prevent the sacrifice she meditated. Of the favourites of Edward, none were more noted for dissolute manners, and want of principle, than lord Easterling; he was, besides, far advanced in life, of unprepossessing appearance, and in every respect the exact opposite of what youth or delicacy could admire. To have passively acquiesced, there-

fore, in the meditated plan of the fair Isabel, would have been to act contrary to every sentiment of nobleness and humanity. Ardently as he wished to regain his lineal honours, yet a thousand times rather he preferred the idea of remaining undistinguished by them for ever, than recovering them at the expence of another's happiness. Accordingly, after an involuntary reperusal of her favour, he turned to her youthful messenger, and having instructed him to inform her of the manner in which he had met him, and some other particulars he deemed it essential for her to know, bade him tell her that to think of pursuing his journey without obtaining a minute's conference with her was impossible; and that he should, therefore, straightway proceed to a certain inn in the vicinity of her residence, the same, indeed, to which, at the moment, he was bending his steps, for the purpose of waiting there till it could be granted. Henry promised to be exact

in

in the delivery of his message; and some pieces of gold being forced on him, tripped off with heart and heels equally light.

No sooner was he gone than Edmund put into the hand of the wondering sir Roland the letter he had just received, as the quickest method of explaining what had so surprised him. The feelings it excited in his breast were but little inferior to those it had given rise to in his. With similar admiration and delight did he view the romantic generosity of the fair writer; and with equal horror, on the explanation that followed from Edmund, think of the sacrifice she meditated being permitted.

"No, no," he impatiently exclaimed, "she must not be allowed to give herself to the arms of a being so undeserving of her; she must be preserved from them, for the purpose of blessing one worthy of the affections of such a heart as hers."

"From what I think of her," said Edmund, "it were difficult to find such a one."

 "Not

"Not so the fair Isabel herself, I shrewdly suspect," said sir Roland; "no, if I mistake not," smiling expressively, "she would not long hesitate, if at liberty to declare her real sentiments, that she had already found one in her opinion every way deserving of them; and would your modesty permit you to be candid, am convinced you would acknowledge your thinking as I do."

"I should be very deficient in it," said Edmund, "were I to give way to such a conjecture."

"And yet," rejoined sir Roland, "it would be the most natural one you could yield to on the present occasion; and, trust me, I hope it is a just one, that thus a sweet reward may be secured to you for all you have suffered."

"I pray you, on this subject say no more," cried Edmund, extremely agitated; "of happiness I have relinquished all hope; but tranquillity may, perhaps, be mine, if not my own fault."

"And

"And at your time of life, 'tis natural to suppose a mere exemption from anxiety would suffice to content you. No, no—believe me, my dear Edmund, if you think so, you mistake; the warm temperament of youth requires something more than the mere cessation of positive evils to satisfy it."

"Well, perhaps I think—perhaps I feel so," replied Edmund; "but is it not wisdom to endeavour to control our wishes when their accomplishment is despaired of?"

"Undoubtedly; but it is not wisdom, because disappointed of happiness in one shape, to disdain it in every other. The power that deems trials requisite for us, if supported in a proper manner, seldom allows one gate to be closed upon our prospects without benevolently opening another to us. She whom you loved has proved undeserving; but for her changeableness is there not a chance of your being amply compensated, by the affection

of

of her whom, without seeking, you have won?"

"I beseech—I implore you," cried Edmund, still more agitated, "not to pursue this theme; besides, believing myself incapable of love again, I should, from the consideration of my situation, grieve to think it were as you imagine."

"And pray what is there so desperate in your situation as to induce you to do so?" demanded his friend. "Supposing the worst, that Edward turns a deaf ear to our application, as my adopted son will you not possess sufficient to satisfy moderate wishes? The opinion I have formed of the fair Isabel militates against the idea of her being overvain or ambitious; and should we be disappointed in our suit, she must be our companion to the shores of another kingdom."

Edmund looked impatient and distressed; Emmeline was still too uppermost in his thoughts, too fondly, too tenderly beloved,

loved, to permit him to think, without a shrinking sensation, of forming any other alliance; yet, notwithstanding this, could he not help feeling something of anxiety to behold the youthful Isabel, exclusive of the consideration that rendered him solicitous for an interview, so lovely did his imagination picture her to him. From never having seen her, he concluded she was one of the younger daughters of lord Pendennis, several of the elder ones having already made their appearance at court, but without being so immediately settled as their father wished, owing to the small portions he had the power of giving them—a circumstance to which, Edmund was previously aware, was owing his proposition for an alliance with him.

By this time they had nearly reached the inn where they proposed alighting, a little rustic building, contiguous to the paling of lord Pendennis's park, and peeping out amidst clumps of firs and elms, upon a wild

wild common, overgrown with heath and fern.

The moment Edmund entered, he withdrew from sir Roland, for the purpose of writing his intended letter to lord Trecothick; the advance of the day requiring he should no longer delay it, if he wished to avoid the imputation of treating him with disrespect.

Dictated by his heart, there was nothing in it that was not calculated to affect the noble one of him to whom it was addressed. Though in justice to himself he could not avoid acknowledging that his relinquishment of Emmeline was owing to a conviction of her repenting her engagement to him, yet to excuse this repentance, or rather prevent the motive to which he ascribed it being suspected, he said all that generosity could suggest, forcing himself to declare, that from the natural timidity of her sex, he could not wonder, that upon due consideration she should

should feel unwilling to unite her destiny to a man's whose unacknowledged name there was reason to believe was his chief security from danger. For the liberality, the nobleness of sentiment that had ever permitted him to indulge a hope of an union with her, he avowed the warmest gratitude, a sense of obligation that nothing could subdue, and that must for ever render him solicitous for the happiness of him to whom he could not avoid believing he was now bidding a last farewell, and the prosperity of his illustrious house.

To entrust a letter so essential to his feelings, to know it safely delivered to the care of any one but a person on whom he knew he might rely, was not to be thought of. Jacques, therefore, was deputed to be its bearer; and accordingly, as soon as he had refreshed himself, and received the instructions Edmund deemed necessary to give, he once more turned his face towards the Castle.

While Edmund was busied writing, sir Roland was busied in providing a dinner

for

for him, aware his exhausted frame needed refreshment. The fare here was of a very plain description; such, however, as neither health no unvitiated taste could possibly reject: rashers cut from the gammon which hung dangling from the ceiling—eggs from the barn, round which the fowl were cackling—home-made bread and ale, clear as the brook that bubbled near the spot, and sparkling as the wit to which it often gave rise.

"Experience," said sir Roland, suddenly pausing towards the conclusion of their simple repast, with a look of innate content, "every day tends to confirm the truth of some adage or other. 'That nature is easily satisfied,' how forcibly has it now proved! for do we feel a want of more than is here furnished? a proof," with a smile of meaning, "that happiness is still within our reach; for in the green bowers of the Soane, we shall have the power of procuring all that simplicity, at least, can desire."

Edmund perfectly knew the inference he wished drawn from his words, but forbore acknowledging he did, from his unwillingness to renew a subject agitating to his feelings. Yet were his thoughts much occupied by the fair Isabel, wondering whether she would grant the requested interview.

At length his suspense on the subject was terminated. Soon after dinner her young messenger, Henry, made his appearance to say, that as soon as it was dusk she would meet him in the cottage of her nurse, his mother—"Which," taking him to the door, "is not above a stone's throw from this," he added. "There," pointing to a lonely one, half hid by furze, "where you see the sheep nibbling, it stands."

No sooner was he gone, than Edmund revealed to sir Roland what had been communicated to him in a whisper; and, at the time that had been mentioned, both proceeded to the place of appointment,

Edmund

Edmund conceiving, from the manner in which she had mentioned his friend, that his being accompanied by him would not be displeasing to her, and would give a sanction, requisite, on her account, to their meeting.

END OF VOL. II.

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